

EVERYDAY LIFE IN THE NEAR EAST: THE EVIDENCE OF THE 7th/13th-  
CENTURY ILLUSTRATIONS OF AL-HARIRI'S MAQAMAT

SHIRLEY GUTHRIE

Volume 1

DOCTOR of PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

1991



DECLARATION

June, 1991

I declare that this thesis has been composed by myself, and that it is my own work.

(Mrs)



EVERYDAY LIFE IN THE NEAR EAST: THE EVIDENCE OF THE 7th/13th-  
CENTURY ILLUSTRATIONS OF AL-HARĪRĪ'S MAQĀMĀT

C O N T E N T S

VOLUME I

	Pages
i. Abstract	v-vii
ii. Preface	vii-ix
iii. Acknowledgments	x-xi
iv. Transliteration	xii
v. Al-Harīrī's <u>Maqāmāt</u>	xiii-xxii

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION	1-10
--------------	------

CHAPTER 2

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

i. <u>Ramaḍān</u>	
{a} The ʿĪd al-Fiṭr sermon { <u>khutba</u> }	11-30
{b} The military band { <u>ṭabl khaṇā'</u> }	31-45
ii. The <u>hajj</u>	46-47
{a} The <u>maḥmil</u> procession	48-60
{b} The pilgrims	61-76

CHAPTER 3

POWER AND AUTHORITY

i The Ruler	
{a} The Arab governor	77-91
{b} The Saljūq governor	92-121

ii	The Judiciary	Pages 122-146
----	---------------	------------------

## CHAPTER 4

### TRADE

{a}	The Caravan	147-161
{b}	The <u>khān</u>	161-177
{c}	The Slave Market	178-193

## CHAPTER 5

### ASPECTS OF URBAN LIFE

#### The City

{a}	The Cupper	194-212
{b}	The Library	212-220
{c}	The Schoolroom	220-235
{d}	Musicians	236-244
{e}	Professional mourners	244-249

## CHAPTER 6

### ASPECTS OF RURAL LIFE

{a}	The Water Wheel	250-256
{b}	The Village	256-273
{c}	The Bedouin	273-288

## CHAPTER 7

### WOMEN IN THE MAQĀMĀT

{a}	The Virtuous Wife	289-298
{b}	Childbirth	298-314
{c}	Women and the Law	315-331
{d}	The <u>jāriya</u>	332-347
{e}	Women in the mosque	347-354

# VOLUME II

## CHAPTER 8

HOSPITALITY	Pages
{a} Drinking	355-376
{b} Etiquette and food	377-390

## CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION	390a-c
------------	--------

### APPENDIX 1{a} a general description of the manuscripts.

1. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, <u>arabe</u> 6094	391-397
2. Leningrad, Academy of Science, S.23	397-406
3. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, <u>arabe</u> 5847	409-416
4. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, <u>arabe</u> 3929	416-422
5. Istanbul, Suleymaniye, <u>Esad Efendi</u> 2916 ***	422-430
6. London, British Library, or. 1200	430-437

### APPENDIX 1{b}

THE COMPLETE LIST OF 7TH/13TH-CENTURY MAQĀMĀT ILLUSTRATIONS:  
some 400 miniatures identified, with a brief description,  
textual quotes and, where reproduced, the surrounding Arabic  
caption translated. 438-500

APPENDIX 2. Chart of the 7th/13th-century manuscripts - number of  
folios; number of illustrations;  
number of maqāmāt not illustrated.

500a

APPENDIX 3. Architectural drawings, representing a typology of  
arches, spandrels and frames for the  
7th/13th-century **and** 8th/14th-century  
Maqāmāt manuscripts. These do not attempt  
to relate to vernacular architecture and are not to  
scale; they are merely a first step in identification.  
501-509

APPENDIX 4. BIBLIOGRAPHY 520-539

\*\*\* Grabar numbered this manuscript "2916" on page 97 of his paper, "A Newly Discovered Illustrated Manuscript of the Maqāmāt of Ḥarīrī" in Ars Orientalis V, 1963. However, on the one occasion where it is numbered in his The Illustrations of the Maqāmāt, on page 12, it appears as "Esad Efendi 2961". I have assumed that the introductory article is correct, and that there was a misprint in the book.

\*\*\*\*\*

EVERYDAY LIFE IN THE NEAR EAST THE EVIDENCE OF THE  
7th/13th-CENTURY ILLUSTRATIONS OF AL-HARĪRĪ'S MAQĀMĀT

A B S T R A C T

Six 7th/13th-century illustrated manuscripts of al-Ḥarīrī's Maqāmāt are the subject of this thesis. The Maqāmāt or "Assemblies" are justly viewed, after the Qur'ān itself, as "the chief treasure of the Arabic tongue". There is a terminus ad quem of 1310 for the London B.L. or. 9718 manuscript, because its artist/scribe lived to eighty years of age, and the possibility exists that it properly belongs to the second half of the 7th/13th century. This is an interesting manuscript; unfortunately, its poor state precludes detailed study.

The Maqāmāt comprise 50 tales of a gifted hero, Abū Zayd, who delights in duping his fellow men from all walks of life and in a variety of lands by masterly displays of erudition; they occur in the lawcourt, the governor's palace, the bustling sūq, the mosque, the city or in more rustic surroundings. It is proposed that the illustrations offer an unparalleled insight into the life of the period.

Some 100 photographic reproductions from the 7th/13th-century manuscripts are included, the majority of them in colour. Individual illustrations appear in the body of the thesis, with a translation of the surrounding text in bold typeface; a further selection of miniatures is interspersed in the catalogues. The main reason for their choice was the desire to give as varied a selection as possible, and to reflect the actual material of the thesis.



For example, the Paris B.N. arabe 5847, Leningrad Academy of Science S.23 and Istanbul Suleymaniye Mosque Esad Efendi 2916 manuscripts all yielded valuable evidence concerning architectural and landscape settings and inherited iconographies; Paris B.N. arabe 3929, with Paris B.N. arabe 5847, {the Wāsiṭī manuscript} demonstrated masterly psychological insight into the characters on the part of the artist; the painterly and decorative aspects of Paris B.N. arabe 6094 were revealing and provided an alternative to one's notions of an 'Arab' manuscript, while the London B.L. or. 1200, although a fairly literal and in some respects inferior work, was nevertheless of value as the reflection of an existing tradition.

Other factors, such as satire or visual pun, were also considered, but the final choice was necessarily circumscribed by the chapter headings; these in turn cover as broad a spectrum of everyday life as possible. One can hardly claim to produce a fully comprehensive selection from some four hundred and fifty illustrations, but this thesis is an attempt to visualise the contemporary scene through the eyes of the author, the narrator and the painter. It should be borne in mind that al-Ḥarīrī was writing some one hundred years before the Maqāmāt manuscripts were illustrated.

Visual evidence is reinforced with reference to contemporary manuscript illumination and illustration, and the fields of the decorative arts and architecture. This material is further amplified by literary references, which include belles lettres {adab}, historical accounts, poetry and anecdotal works.

My initial approach was sociological. I wished to look at these paintings not as documents of style or iconography, as is so often the method followed by Western art historians, but to examine them as visual evidence amplifying and complementing literary and historical accounts of the mediaeval Near East. The aim is that the thesis should provoke, and stimulate a wider interest in the illustrated Maqāmāt.

## P R E F A C E

Codex numbers are initially given in full, then in abbreviated form. Maqāmāt refers to the entire literary work of 50 tales, and maqāma is the singular. These terms may subsequently be abbreviated to Mqt. and Mq. in the footnotes. Footnotes are given in full on their first mention; thereafter an abbreviated version appears.

Grabar's The Illustrations of the Maqāmāt {which includes microfiches and full details of the 8th/14th-century manuscripts} has proved indispensable, and folio numbers are his; unless otherwise stated, these are recto. Microfiche references are quoted throughout the thesis, to ensure the widest possible access to the Maqāmāt illustrations.

I looked at the Arabic surrounding the illustrations. The final versions of the English translations are those of Chenery, Preston or Steingass and they were chosen out of particular suitability or personal preference; for example, Preston's renderings in rhyme seem to me to capture an archaic quality which is more appropriate to Abū Zayd's poetic eloquence than the sometimes-prosaic versions by the other scholars. However, due regard was paid to correctness, based on the criticism of others.



The translations are in bold typeface when they appear as captions on individual miniatures under discussion.

Illustrations appear in the body of the thesis; this has the advantage of throwing light on the extent to which the artist relied on the text. Otherwise, the text is from elsewhere in the tale, and chosen for its aptness. Wherever possible, colour reproductions have been obtained. Unfortunately, reproductions from the Istanbul Esad Efendi 2916 manuscript are poor, but they were the best possible in the circumstances.

The system of transliteration adopted for this thesis is basically that used by the Encyclopaedia of Islam, but updated; "j" has been substituted for "dj", and "q" for "k"; the final 'h' has been dropped from feminine endings, and underlining of letters has been dispensed with.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am extremely grateful to my supervisor, Professor Robert Hillenbrand, for his patient encouragement, guidance and constructive criticism, which enabled me to widen my horizons and persevere with this thesis.

My thanks go to Joe Rock at Edinburgh University for many of the photographic reproductions.

I am particularly obliged to Madame Monique Cohen, Conservator of the Department of Oriental Manuscripts at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, for allowing me access to their treasures, and to the Photographic Service at the Bibliothèque Nationale for supplying colour slides of the manuscript illustrations.

I wish to record my thanks to staff at the British Library, who made their manuscripts available, and to Miss Y. Yasumura at the School of Oriental and African Studies and Teresa Fitzherbert at the Slide Room, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

On the technical side of manuscript production, I sincerely thank Andrea Chalmers, and I am indebted to my son, Gordon, for his time-consuming expertise.

This thesis could not have been undertaken, far less completed, without the constant encouragement, understanding and support of friends and family. My husband, Charles, and son Gordon, in particular, have been mainstays, and I will remain eternally thankful to them.

For Charles and our family

## LIST OF TRANSLITERATION

### SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION OF ARABIC CHARACTERS :

<i>Consonants</i>			<i>Long Vowels</i>	<i>Diphthongs</i>
ء (except when initial)	ذ z	ظ q	آ ā,	أ — aw
ب b	س s	ك k	ؤ ū	إي — ay
ت t	ش sh	ل l	ي ī	
ث th	ص ṣ	م m		ـِيّ (final form ī)
ج ġ	د d	ن n	<i>Short Vowels</i>	
ح ḥ	ط ṭ	ه h	ـَ a	ـُww (final form ū)
خ kh	ظ ṭ	و w	ـِ u	
د d	ع ʿ	ي y	ـِ i	
ذ dh	غ gh			
ر r	ف f			

ا a; at (construct state)

ال (article), al- and 'l- (even before the antero-palatals)

## AL-HARĪRĪ'S MAQĀMĀT

Al-Harīrī's Maqāmāt has rightly been viewed as a literary masterpiece of linguistic ingenuity. After the Qur'ān itself, it has engaged the attention of the largest number of Arab scholars, and they have tended to view the work as an almost unique tribute to their culture and language. <sup>1</sup>

As literary genre, the Maqāmāt was not new in al-Harīrī's time, {the late 5th/11th and early 6th/12th centuries}, and it is generally accepted that al-Hamadhānī's 400 Maqāmāt of the 4th/10th century represented a fully developed and independent literary form which provided the paradigm for al-Harīrī's 50 Maqāmāt. Al-Sharīshī described these as "more comprehensive, elaborate and complete, and so excelled those of Hamadhānī". <sup>2</sup>

Al-Harīrī's earliest commentator, al-Mutarrizi, who was born only some 22 years after al-Harīrī's death, admitted that he encountered incomprehensible passages and had to consult practically the whole range of Arabic literature to carry out his task. <sup>3</sup>

Al-Mutarrizi defines maqāma primarily as "a place where one stands upright", and hence "the place where one is at any time". <sup>4</sup> It is used metonymically to denote "the persons assembled in any place", or "the discourses delivered or conversations held in any such assembly", <sup>5</sup> in other words, a literary gathering.

The maqāma form involves the interchange of abstruse poetry {saj'} <sup>6</sup> and prose passages in a single narrative. Both al-Hamadhani and al-Harīrī chose an unscrupulous but wonderfully



eloquent vagabond, whose escapades were related by a narrator {al-rāwī}; al-Ḥarīrī's narrator, al-Ḥārith, is a peripatetic merchant who recounts his experiences on his travels. He invariably chances upon an altercation involving the trickster, Abū Zayd. Abū Zayd is usually in disguise, and he lives on his wits by exhibiting his many talents and dazzling admiring audiences with displays of erudite poetry and rhetoric. There are a few notable exceptions, when Abū Zayd's motives and conduct are beyond reproach.<sup>7</sup> Abū Zayd seems to be based on actual mediaeval precedents whose sole means of subsistence was based on their eloquent gifts; in other words, he fulfilled Preston's description of a "knight-errant of literature", and represented a type who assimilated characteristics from many of the most cultivated minds of the period.<sup>8</sup>

Al-Ḥarīrī {1054-1122} acknowledged his debt to Badī' al-Zamān {the "Wonder of the Age"} al-Hamadhānī in his Preface.<sup>9</sup> However, he was perhaps paying al-Hamadhānī a back-handed compliment, when he initially declined the invitation of the wazīr, Anūshirvān, to compose the work, pleading "the lame steed cannot run like the strong courser".<sup>10</sup> In the event, he appears to have risen to the challenge and did not just emulate al-Hamadhānī, but out-did him. Al-Ḥarīrī's purpose is clear. He said that his 50 Maqāmāt, contained,

" ... serious language and lightsome,  
 And combine refinement with dignity of style,  
 And brilliances with jewels of eloquence,  
 And beauties of literature with its rarities,  
 Beside quotations from the Qur'ān wherewith I adorned them,  
 And choice metaphors, and Arab proverbs that I  
 interspersed...".<sup>11</sup>

However, al-Ḥarīrī's Maqāmāt did not meet with universal

acclaim. Hitherto, there had been hostile criticism of any works which were capable of being construed as 'frivolous', and this attitude persisted.

Al-Harīrī made no attempt conceal his admiration for "this unprincipled and thoroughly disreputable scamp", Abū Zayd. Despite his admission that he had introduced frivolous elements, he was insistent that his work had an underlying moral purpose. He asked,

"What blame can attach to one who has composed anecdotes with the motive of conveying instruction, not deceptive display, and sought therein the improvement of others, not mere fiction?" <sup>12</sup>

Al-Harīrī frequently used his tales as a subtle and indirect way of satirising the prevailing social order and drawing a moral; perhaps they in some way gave voice to the literate man in the street, and in this may lie one reason for their appeal.

He achieved his purpose by building up tension and resolving it by a surprising denouement. It is arguable that, to a certain extent, there is an element of predictability in the outcome, but the interest never flags, due to the multiplicity of settings and plots. It goes without saying that the Maqāmāt was written with no thought for illustrations.

The genre reflects a fascination with one of the many types of tricksters who were prevalent in contemporary urban society. It carries on an interest in the lower orders of society since the age of al-Jāhīz, the 3rd/9th century, and follows on from Abū Dulaf's Qasīda Sāsāniyya, which dealt with Abū Zayd's supposed ancestors, the roguish Banū Sāsān. <sup>13</sup> This seems to signal a move away from the fictional characters and animals of fables, towards a



'people-centred' and realistic content. Although trickery always played a large part in fables, goodness and justice ultimately prevailed.

Beeston has correctly noted the parallels between al-Hamadhānī's Maqāmāt and al-Tanūkhī's earlier tales, and considers that they are based "on the common stock of Arabic anecdotage current at the time".<sup>14</sup> Al-Ḥarīrī's Maqāmāt is patently also linked with Arabic anecdotage, and I have quoted frequently from al-Tanūkhī's collected tales to amplify points.

Many commentators consider that al-Ḥarīrī based the narrator, al-Ḥārith, on himself;<sup>15</sup> this is entirely plausible, for he, too, enjoyed a comfortable mode of life, was a literate Baṣran, and expressed a great regard for feats of eloquence. In this respect, the author was, presumably, little different from his contemporary bourgeois audience; these, in turn, possibly formed a potential source of patronage for copyists and illustrators.

Further, 'Abū Zayd' is one of the most commonplace of Arab names; in examples of Arabic grammar, 'Zayd' denotes "any man whatever".<sup>16</sup> Abū Zayd is versatile, a 'man for all seasons', and could be anyone; he represents the 'human interest' element of a tale par excellence.

'Ḥārith' is as indeterminate as 'Abū Zayd', and it is borrowed from an expression attributed to the Prophet,

"Each of you is a Ḥārith, and every one of you a Ḥammām"<sup>17</sup>  
It has the extended meaning of 'one who is subject to cares and anxieties'.<sup>18</sup> Thus it is not difficult to identify Abū Zayd as an ordinary person with all too human failings who invokes in the



reader the notion that "there but for the grace of God go I", and consequently to view al-Hārith as the still small voice of conscience. Such an interpretation should have negated disapprobation.

Al-Tha'alibi's criticism of the poetry of al-Mutanabbi admirably sums up our hero, for

"'Tis the height of merit in a man that his faults  
can be numbered" <sup>19</sup>

Ultimately, good does triumph, and Abū Zayd repents.

I therefore suggest the thoughtful and discerning reader could overlook Abū Zayd's obvious artifice and appreciate the uplifting sermons and discourses which are contained in the literary framework; these are a necessary foil to the character of Abū Zayd. Further, the humour implicit in the deception and deflation of the pomposity of those in high places counteracts the sombre passages. These are arguably necessary literary devices.

One must bear in mind that the average bourgeois reader's interest in the text more than a century later was possibly quite different to that of scholars; perhaps such a reader now sought to be entertained by images.

The credibility at this period of an anti-hero in the mould of Abū Zayd exemplifies a change of spirit, which has its parallel in the decorative arts. The illustration of secular manuscripts was already in vogue by the early 7th/13th century, and represented a

new taste for adding narrative representations to works of art, for example, books, ceramics, glassware or metalwork. It may be that the inclusion of miniatures reflected no more than a change of taste.

It is hoped to demonstrate that the variety of the subject matter and its method of presentation excited the interests of an appreciative audience, even given the abstruseness of the text, and it is possible that the addition of illustrations further widened the appeal of al-Harīrī's Maqāmāt.

Earlier scientific illustration served an important didactic role regarding the identification of the properties of plants and animals, the location of the source of medical dysfunction and trauma, the utility of mechanical devices or military exercises and the like; to that extent, it might have been the text which necessarily dictated the illustrations. Further, it is certain that their explanatory nature imposed a certain degree of realism on the illustrations, where a correct identification and diagnosis was a prerequisite.

On the question of readership, didactic works would have but a relatively limited appeal; these were working books, the 'tools of the trade' of specialists. The same is true of unillustrated volumes of the Maqāmāt, which were the preserve of scholars. All these points might suggest a new, popular, readership. The relative cheapness of paper was a factor in widening the market, and this is discussed later in the section on libraries.

Given the abstruseness of the Maqāmāt text, it could never be popular in the generally accepted use of the word; its appeal would still presumably be confined to a literate and sophisticated metropolitan audience, viz. someone in similar circumstances to the author, a member of the bourgeoisie. An ambitious and affluent middle class had developed in the third, fourth and fifth centuries of Islām. <sup>20</sup> Although it was not an organised group which attained political power generally, it was capable of exerting a powerful socio-economic influence, which peaked at the turn of the 4th/10th and 5th/11th centuries. <sup>21</sup> Whether this audience needed illustrations to elucidate the text in the early 7th/13th century is an open question, because textual exegesis does appear on occasion, particularly in the most sophisticated manuscript of all, al-Wāsiṭī's Paris B.N. arabe 5847 manuscript.

Although similar threads do run through these 7th/13th-century works, as we shall see, it is fair to say that a total of six manuscripts is totally inadequate to determine a clear relationship between them. What is evident is that each represents an individual response by the artist to the challenge of its illustration. Some are more successful than others, as will be demonstrated.

With one exception, al-Wāsiṭī, who was both scribe and painter, we do not know who executed these manuscripts, or who dictated the number of miniatures or their placing in the text. Nor is there any indication if the artists were working speculatively and alone, under patronage, or in an official workshop.



Each manuscript is discussed in detail, and the relevance of the miniatures to the surrounding text analysed. A chart is reproduced in Volume 2 in an attempt to analyse the illustrations in each manuscript story-by-story. It deals with the number of folios and the total number of miniatures, to see if there was any attempt to tailor the text by the insertion of illustrations, a comparison of manuscript sizes, and the occurrence of double-page spreads. The aim is to analyse how the manuscripts were constructed, and to establish stemmata between them, if possible.

An attempt to analyse the correlation, if any, of the number of illustrations to the degree of difficulty of the text and/or the length of individual maqāmāt as defined by Preston, Chenery and Steingass proved impossible to quantify in chart form, and the computer printout is not reproduced. My conclusion is that there was no correlation, and this agrees with Grabar's assertion that

"each story seems to have been treated without an obvious correlation between narrative complexity and the number of images." <sup>22</sup>

Architectural drawings are also reproduced as a typology of arches, spandrels and frameworks throughout both the 7th/13th-century and 8th/14th-century Maqāmāt. These show the folio and Grabar's microfiche numbers for each manuscript, as well as the maqāma number, and they indicate the type of 'building' in which they occur. It is outside the scope of this thesis to relate this typology to vernacular architecture, but it has been done in the analysis of individual miniatures.

The conclusion must be that the time was ripe for the adding of images for their own sake and for their individual aesthetic appeal, and the varied Maqāmāt settings in diverse lands, here and there a market, a caravanserai, a law court and so forth, provide ample scope for illustration.

While it is possible to view the paintings simply as decorative adjuncts to the text, I contend and will demonstrate that a knowledge of the text {whether the original or in translation} is, at the very least, advantageous; even the mediocre London B.L. or. 1200 manuscript can throw up a surprising image, such as a woman lying on the ground in Maqāma 47. This illustration does not appear to have been noticed or commented upon by anyone else. It is a reference to the mother of the proverbial "cupper of Sabāṭ" of the text, <sup>23</sup> and presupposes a knowledge of the whole proverb on the reader's part.

A further example reinforces this point all too clearly. Sakisian entitled the caption of the narrator's picture on f.41 of Paris 3929 "guerrier à chameau", {a warrior on a camel}; <sup>24</sup> in fact, the text above describes al-Hārith in Nasibīn riding "a camel of Mahra", {a town in Yemen}, and bearing a Samharī lance; <sup>25</sup> this may be a literary allusion, a proverbial name for hardness, or refer to its place of manufacture in Abyssinia. <sup>26</sup> The large caption in thulūṭh script in the illustration reads, "The picture of al-Hārith on a Mahran {camel}, with a spear {rumh} in his hand". Despite Sakisian's attribution of this manuscript to the Baghdad

school, the title of his book is La Miniature Persane du XII<sup>e</sup> au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle.

Al-Harīrī's hope was that

"... whoever examines with an eye of intelligence,  
And makes good his insight into fundamental principles,  
Must place my Maqāmat on the list of profitable productions,  
And class them along with those {fabulous} compositions  
Whose subjects are taken from animate and inanimate  
nature". 27

Some of the illustrators have indeed succeeded in  
"profitable productions", and the task is now to prove that their  
work is testament to Ettinghausen's "life encompassed: the external  
world". 28

\*\*\*\*\*



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the thesis is to demonstrate that the illustrations of the 7th/13th-century Maqāmāt of al-Ḥarīrī are a reflection of everyday events in the Near East of the period, to clarify aspects of mediaeval Islamic culture and to provide as comprehensive a reference work as possible for further investigation of this complex text. This has been done by establishing broad categories of subject matter and treating together the various illustrations that fall within them. Thus the illustrations themselves become the means to analyse, with reference to a wide variety of literary and historical sources, aspects of mediaeval Islamic society. Grabar introduced some 450 miniatures of the 7th/13th-century manuscripts on microfiche in an excellent study, in which he sought to evaluate shared and diverse ways of dealing with the same topics, the relationship, if any, between different pictorial cycles, and to establish whether there was a distinct Maqāmāt idiom. An in-depth analysis of individual miniatures was outwith the scope of such a brief.

I considered that an art-historical approach to specific miniatures could be enhanced and consolidated by analysing them within the literary context of the Maqāmāt. This is consistent with Grabar's proposal that "all manuscripts should be defined in terms of their relation to the text".<sup>1</sup> As it happens, his own study, while by no means ignoring this approach, had a somewhat different focus, so much close analysis of the interplay between text and image remained {and remains} to be done. Accordingly, specialist commentaries on the Maqāmāt were consulted;<sup>2</sup> they were extremely valuable in gaining additional insights. There was also a whole set of related issues to discuss. These included the

everyday situations and locations in the depiction of the 'low life' adventures of Abū Zayd. Abū Zayd was a well-known exponent of a type on the fringe of the criminal classes, who frequented public places to live off his considerable wits, and was perhaps a prototype for the popular picaresque heroes of later European literature. The visual counterparts of his marvellous tales afford a glimpse of court life, litigation in the lawcourts, religious and military pomp and ceremony and the true purpose of religious ritual, the bustle of the sūq, the routine of village life, Bedouin hospitality and the like.

It is difficult to identify precisely the audience of the Maqāmāt. Social historians in general acknowledge the presence of an influential middle class at that period,<sup>3</sup> but it is not known whether ties of occupation, residence in a particular quarter, or affiliation to individual brotherhoods or religious sects bound them. One presumes that they were in similar circumstances to the author himself, a literate Baṣran merchant; the narrator, al-Ḥārith, was a peripatetic merchant. It may be significant that departures from the architectural norm such as shops, the caravanserai and a covered street outside al-Wāsiṭī's Rayy mosque all involve aspects of town life relevant to an urban mercantile class. This would be a prosperous and leisured group, and potential patrons of the arts. As such, they would be confident and self-assured, and unlikely to wish to change the status quo. To this extent, Abū Zayd may have offered his audience a sophisticated 'voice', the analogue of the scabrous shadow theatre of the lower orders in society. Some degree of interdependence with the ruling classes is suggested. Merchants procured luxury goods; as such, they were a source of income through taxation and customs dues, and they would also be in a position to act as couriers with news of foreign places and events.

The Leningrad S.23 and Istanbul E.E. 2916 manuscripts share certain



attributes {although differing in many respects}, and form a key set as a basis for comparison, because all the other manuscripts can be explained in relation to them. The events of the narrative are sometimes relegated to a secondary role due to the over-riding concern for setting, although the paintings almost always appear at the 'correct' place in the text. Architecture is prominent and the pictorial space highly developed, particularly in the case of the landscape in Istanbul E.E. 2916. Paris B.N. 5847 should be linked with these two works in its concern for backdrop setting and genre quality, and in that the majority of its unusual interpretations might suggest the modification of an earlier form of Maqāmāt illustration. Because of the time-scale of these manuscripts, and their independence of the other Maqāmāt illustrations, it may be that other versions have been lost.

There is no colophon for Leningrad S.23, but it is generally regarded as the earliest known illustrated Maqāmāt manuscript.<sup>4</sup> It is related stylistically and iconographically to Paris B.N. 5847, Istanbul E.E. 2916 and the Dioscorides De Materia Medica work of 1224 from Baghdād. Settings have been expanded, with consequent repetition and the formulation of types of architecture and people. Both the iconography and certain postures or typical compositional devices such as figures organised on an elliptical base-line, seem to betray the influence of Christian painting. The people depicted are apparently Arab, and their repetitive lively poses remind one of the shadow theatre. The place of execution is unclear; the architecture is decorative and contrived and does not provide any real clue as to provenance.

Paris B.N. 6094 is set apart from all other Maqāmāt manuscripts in that it is a re-working of Hellenistic art by a Byzantine school. The date 1222 appears in two places,<sup>5</sup> and the provenance of Syria seems secure.

We have a terminus ad quem of 1242-58 for Istanbul E.E. 2916,<sup>6</sup> and it has

not been attributed to a particular area. It is also linked in iconography and style to the 1224 Dioscorides manuscript, Leningrad S.23 and Paris B.N. 5847, as mentioned above. The mosques here appear to be the brick-built Iraqi types, and the presence of roll-up blinds, of reed matting and of wind-towers {which were also depicted in Paris B.N. 5847}, suggest at least a hot, dry climate like that of southern Iraq. Like the Leningrad S.23 artist, this painter is primarily concerned with the setting and he has expanded the imagery. His people and costume appear to be Arab, and an Iraqi provenance is possible.

Paris B.N. 5847 is unique in that its colophon reveals that the same person, al-Wāsiṭī, copied and illustrated it in 1237. It is a luxurious work which has been attributed to the so-called 'Baghdād' school of painting, chiefly on account of its stylistic relationship to Kitāb al-Bayṭāra {Book of Farriery}.<sup>7</sup> Al-Wāsiṭī had great psychological insight derived from his knowledge of the text. He established a rare empathy with the characters, and provided the greatest variety of imagery. He employed many double-page illustrations, and one wonders whether this was because he was perhaps less successful than the artists of Leningrad S.23 and Istanbul E.E. 2916 in developing the pictorial space on a single folio.

Paris B.N. 3929 shares many of the features of the so-called 'Mosul' school of painting, such as flat compositions in strong colours, patterns similar to those on metalwork, and uniformity of style. Saljūq royal iconography has been drawn upon, and Mosul was an important Saljūq centre. A dating in the 1240's has been generally agreed, but assuming that Ward's revised date of 1206 for an Istanbul copy of a Jazari manuscript, Al-jamī' bayn al-'ilm w'al-'amal al-nafi' fi'l-ṣinā'at al-ḥiyāl, is correct,<sup>8</sup> the similarities in style and iconography may indeed point to an earlier date for Paris B.N. 3929.

The colophon of London B.L. 1200 mentions 1256 and the copyist's name, one



ʿUmar ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Mubarak al-Mawṣilī. It is in poor condition and the faces have been repainted in a schematic fashion. This manuscript is clearly derivative; it adheres to the Mosul tradition, and shares landscape and other features with Paris B.N. 3929. It is surprising to find a double-page illustration of the Samarqand mosque in Maqāma 28.<sup>9</sup> However it is unlike al-Wāsiṭī's double spread of the Rayy mosque in Maqāma 21;<sup>10</sup> it is extremely simple, and the preacher and other officials are clearly based on eastern Christian priests. No place of execution has been suggested.

Certain identifiable pictorial cycles are evident to a greater or lesser degree throughout the Maqāmāt. The princely repertoire, except in al-Wāsiṭī's frontispieces, is not a direct borrowing. It has influenced al-Wāsiṭī's satirical portrait of the governor of Raḥba,<sup>11</sup> his tavern scene in Maqāma 12,<sup>12</sup> and his drinking bout beside a water-wheel in Maqāma 24.<sup>13</sup> One also finds it in the Istanbul E.E. 2916 portrait of Abū Zayd as a governor in the 26th tale.<sup>14</sup> The rulers in B.N. 6094 and B.N. 3929 are Saljūqs. This cycle was extended to take in other figures of authority such as judges, as well as beardless youths; portrayals of youths in general are influenced by these types. Costume obviously varies according to the function of the incumbent; judges are universally depicted wearing the taylasān or head-shawl. Governors are fairly consistent in dress, whether Arab or Saljuq, and the thrones of both are consistent, depending on the tradition.

Adaptation of 'author portraits' has been noted in the B.N. 5847 library,<sup>15</sup> the depiction of the judge in Leningrad S.23 for the 43rd tale,<sup>16</sup> and in the Istanbul E.E. 2916 sick-bed portrait in Maqāma 19.<sup>17</sup>

There appears to have been a set formula for illustrating the texts, although at whose behest is unknown. My analyses show that illustrations throughout the corpus appear on many occasions at the same part of the text. Confrontation scenes occur at specific instances as denouements and may have been created especially for the Maqāmāt. Even in crowd scenes there is a limited range of male types, and one can agree with Grabar that this "may reflect the narrow range of visual experiences available to artists and their audiences".<sup>18</sup>

We possibly see the influence of the shadow theatre in the Leningrad S.23 and Paris B.N. 3929 manuscripts; both have lively, jerky figures, and there is a definite sense of theatricality in the elaborate and formulaic architectural settings, and the sea-going vessel in Maqāma 39 of the former.<sup>19</sup> Ibn Dāniyāl's three Arabic shadow plays, written around 1267, are the oldest extant shadow plays. Ettinghausen points out that these were written "not as the first attempt in this direction but based on older traditions and put forward as a revival of this art".<sup>20</sup>

At minimum, the text usually requires that settings be defined as outdoors or indoors. Where a cave, the Euphrates, a hill, and so forth, are mentioned, the artists complied, and to that extent created specific Maqāmāt illustrations.

The Leningrad S.23 and Istanbul E.E. 2916 manuscripts generally establish the primacy and development of the setting, whether architecture or landscape. The Leningrad S.23 painter repeats his architectural formula and depiction of people to the great extent that they become types, and he successfully employs the elliptical base-line to create pictorial space, while the artist of Istanbul E.E. 2916 frequently adds an abundance of architectural features and displays innovative features of landscape in the exploitation of pictorial space which was to become evident in Persian painting. He also reduces the total number of illustrations by eliminating confrontation scenes, and includes elements which are absent in other manuscripts and unrequired by the text, such as a suckling camel in Maqāma 31,<sup>21</sup> the bastinado scene in the schoolroom,<sup>22</sup> and two fighting dogs in the market-place in Maqāma 47.<sup>23</sup> Al-Wāsiṭī may be faithful to the narrative or place illustrations in apparently arbitrary positions; on occasion his interpretation goes far beyond the text, probably owing to the insights garnered in his dual role as artist and scribe.

The painter of B.N. 6094, with the exception of the 25th tale, consistently provides one miniature per maqāma within a schematic and repetitive type of 'architecture'. Paris B.N. 3929 offers a strictly literal adherence to the narrative; the artist takes little account of



natural or constructed settings and re-enacts the human drama. Illustrations in the derivative London B.L. 1200 also usually appear at a particularly apposite point in the tale.

One cannot presuppose that the artists themselves necessarily read the text. The Maqāmāt may have been read aloud to an assembly {maqāma}, in which case the narrative would make clear the setting. Although Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Persia are all mentioned in the text, there is no visual evidence that any regard was paid either to the setting in an area other than where the artist worked, or to the 6th/12th century, when the text itself was written. Artists seem to have produced their own suggestions of a setting in their own time and place. This could encompass anything from a rudimentary pair of spandrels to a full cross-section of a typical Iraqi brick-built mosque with a frieze inscription, from elaborate hillsides with multiple ground-planes to a single plant. Such devices might form a framework, develop space, anchor compositions to a base-line and so on.

Ideally, one would wish to compare the Maqāmāt constructions with extant examples; this is extremely difficult, as so many have not survived, but it is not impossible. Illustrations sometimes depict natural building materials, such as stone, brick, marble, stucco, and reed matting, and one or two stubby Iraqi minarets appear. These are perhaps relevant pointers to the place where the manuscript was produced.

Some artists apparently painted from observable surroundings, for example al-Wāsiṭī's drinking-bout in Maqāma 24 in a garden irrigated by a water-wheel,<sup>24</sup> the Istanbul E.E. 2916 mosques,<sup>25</sup> and the two distinct types of boats in Maqāmāt 22 and 39.<sup>26</sup> It is impossible to say which of several different illustrations of the same setting is the 'true' rendering; what seems important is that the scene was in some way recognised by a viewer.

In order to portray events outside their own experience, for example an appearance at a governor's court or before a judge, artists would have had either to use or adapt an existing model, or create a new formula. It should be noted that no specific design for palaces or

lawcourts has emerged; in such cases, recognisable cultural items such as costume, personal attendants or furnishings defined the setting more precisely.

Textiles are also problematical. Costly fabrics were shipped from far afield, and are well-documented. Costume would be subject to the dictates of fashion and regional variation; contemporary dictionaries were a fount of information for research on this. Enormous prices for textiles have been cited. It is likely that these were the preserve of the very rich and that some of the splendid and brightly-coloured garments seen in the Maqāmāt in crowds and in agricultural settings fulfil other functions. Colours are used for their aesthetic qualities and as elements of composition defining pictorial space.

Colour symbolism does not appear to play a prominent part. One notable exception is that while the mourners in al-Wāsiṭī's cemetery in Maqāma 11 are not wearing the dark blue associated with bereavement, we see that the men are portrayed in startling white garments which link them with the white-shrouded corpse and may indicate that they are kin.

The taverns depicted in the Wāsiṭī and Leningrad S.23 manuscripts are remarkably similar and detail all processes of wine-making and consumption.<sup>27</sup> Archetypes possibly lie behind these. First, al-Wāsiṭī's Abū Zayd is parodying a royal figure; drinking is so associated visually with royal imagery that this seems to be the only appropriate depiction here. The Paris B.N. 3929 also shows Abū Zayd on a type of throne, while the London B.L. 1200 manuscript confirms an association of drinking with the princely cycle in its inclusion of the standard paraphernalia of flowers, cup-bearers and musicians.<sup>28</sup> Secondly, the taverns in Paris B.N. 5847 and Leningrad S.23 themselves may be no ordinary drinking-dens, but wine-halls of some distinction and possibly with royal connections.

Every attempt was made to utilise literary texts as contemporary in time and place as possible; this was extremely difficult for a Western art historian, and there is undoubtedly a wealth of material yet to be unearthed. One is bound to agree with Grabar that "no truly usable method" of attempting to relate literature and art has yet been formulated.<sup>29</sup> Caution should also be exercised on the assumption that



accounts of what held good for Egypt or Syria, for example, necessarily applied to Iraq; here quotations from such sources as the Cairo Geniza or Ibn Munqidh's Memoirs come to mind. Customs might vary according to region, external influences and the interplay of various cultural strains. This is somewhat counterbalanced by the great extent to which the tenets of Islam govern the minutiae of daily living.

There is also a danger that earlier {or later} material may not be strictly relevant. A case in point is the 2nd/9th-century work, Risālat al-Qiyān {The Epistles of Singing-Girls} of al-Jāhīz which is cited on occasion in the thesis. It should be borne in mind that al-Jāhīz was a theologian, man of letters and satirist; as such, he was unlikely to be an entirely impartial observer of society. In mitigation, the function of singing-girls, their tenuous position in society and their machinations to maintain the status quo may be assumed. On the other hand, al-Tanūkhī, a 4th/10th-century judge, has been extensively quoted. In view of the proven link between Tanūkhī's anecdotage and the Maqāmāt literary genre, his informal observations on the frailties of human nature frequently seem pertinent.

It needs to be stressed that these various factors were given due consideration, and that the diverse sources quoted in the thesis represent only a fraction of the research material, and were deemed to be appropriate in **particular instances**. In many cases, accounts by mediaeval travellers from many lands shed valuable light on, for example, the splendid pilgrim caravans of high-ranking officials, or the plight of caravans in arduous desert conditions.

\*\*\*\*\*

## CHAPTER 2

### THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

#### i. Ramaḍān.

{a} The ‘Īd al-Fiṭr sermon {khuṭba}.

Maqāma 7 is set in Barqa‘īd, which was a town of considerable size north of Mosul and south of Naṣībīn.<sup>1</sup> The tale unfolds on the great feast of ‘Īd al-Fiṭr which signals the breaking of the fast at the end of the month of Ramaḍān; this actually takes place on the 1st of Shawwāl, the following month. Preston suggests that the author chose this location because it rhymes with the words barq ‘īd in the end of the next clause.<sup>2</sup> These translate literally as the ‘lightning of the festival’ and are a metaphor for its approach.

Al-Ḥārith was unwilling to resume his journeying on this day of colourful ceremony without observing the obligatory and supererogatory rites. Mindful of a Tradition of the Prophet, he donned new clothes<sup>3</sup> and set out for the Ramaḍān prayers, where he joined the procession of people similarly attired in fine garments. He relates, "Now when the congregation was gathered and arranged in rows, an old man appeared ... trusting for guidance to an emaciated



old woman." 4

Al-Wāsiṭī has produced a striking double page illustration; folio 18v depicts the jāmi' interior, where the preacher delivers the 'Īd al-Fiṭr address, and f.19 shows a group of mounted men with banners and musical instruments.

Turning to f.18v, the three lines of text above the miniature are part of Abū Zayd's speech, and they read,

"{And complaining bitterly of the rigour of the times}.  
He said, 'I am in God's hands, and commit my case to Him;  
There is no power or strength but in Him;  
To Him alone I look; for in mankind  
A source of bounty now no more I find ...'"

He continues in similar vein, then in the two lines of Arabic below, he instructs the woman,

"'But nevertheless, be cheerful, and hope for the best,  
And now collect the papers together, and count them.'  
And she replied, 'I have already collected and counted them.  
And found that the hand of loss had destroyed one of them.'  
Whereupon he exclaimed 'Ruin to thee! Slovenly wretch!'" 5

The illustrations are reproduced overleaf.



f. 18v, 2A1



f. 19:2A2

Later on, the text indicates that the action took place when the congregation "was gathered and arranged in rows" presumably before the sermon, although no khutba is mentioned. The commentator's remarks are written in red down the right hand side of the folio, but they are not clear.

Abū Zayd does not conform to the text's "old man in two cloaks" {shamlataini} <sup>6</sup> with his eyes closed as he feigned blindness, although his left hand rests on his wife's shoulders. The shamla was a cloak which precluded the necessity for other clothing; <sup>7</sup> it was therefore eminently suitable for the poorer classes and would have been the ideal garment for Abū Zayd in this instance, to convey his poverty. This type of robe was also worn by the Jewish poor, and it is cognate with the Hebrew shmala. <sup>8</sup> Instead, Abu Zayd wears a plebeian white robe, albeit with tirāz bands on his sleeves, and an olive-green turban with a tirāz. Under his right arm he carries a "coarse sort of wallet" <sup>9</sup> from which he produced his poems. Despite his supposedly-penurious circumstances, his hair and beard are well-groomed, and his robe snowy-white, so he has evidently made an effort over his appearance; as he says,

"Far better poverty with patient pride  
than bitter scorn and insult to abide." <sup>10</sup>

Abū Zayd's companion does not look "emaciated" and "old"; she is well built and of the type of ample, middle-aged female who appears elsewhere in Paris B.N. 5847. <sup>11</sup> These women are invariably capable-looking and assertive, and here her vivid hand gestures leave one in no doubt that she is literally empty-handed. She wears



an outer wrap of everyday smokey-grey colour, but it is gold-trimmed and again inappropriate for the effect the couple of the text would wish to display, unless it represents her as a refined woman temporarily down on her luck. Perhaps al-Wāsiṭī sought to inject a vein of humour and to indicate to the reader, as if that were necessary by this 7th maqāma, that these are no ordinary beggars. Alternatively, the garments may be used as compositional markers, to draw attention to the principal characters.

Almsgiving on this occasion would be very public, and the exploitative side to Abū Zayd's nature is well to the fore, for he is fully aware of the obligation upon the faithful of the ʿīd al-Fiṭr ṣadaqāt <sup>12</sup> and prepared to capitalise on this baser, but nonetheless human, spur to giving.

Ideally, the deprivations of the Fast should have afforded this congregation insight into the needs of the poor through their own experience of extreme hunger and thirst, and one would expect them to be moved by compassion into generous giving. That they did not do so serves to highlight the naivety of al-Ḥārith, who was the only member of the congregation to give the woman alms, viz., "a dirham and a mite." <sup>13</sup>

This suggests that the congregation knew something that al-Ḥārith did not, namely that the pair were perpetrating a confidence trick. From the 3rd/9th century onwards there had been an interest in the low life, in the form of itinerant tricksters. <sup>14</sup> We know from at least 2 maqāmāt <sup>15</sup> that Abū Zayd considered himself to be a member of the Banū Sāsān. <sup>16</sup>

Sāsān was the son of a petty ruler of a district in western



Persia.<sup>17</sup> He was disinherited, took refuge with Kurds, and in folklore founded the begging fraternities and became their king; his clan apparently embraced all groups outwith the pale of law-abiding society.<sup>18</sup> Abū Zayd and his wife are clearly not of the criminal class as such, but they are here at least on the margins of society, and making up the general collectivity of the self-styled 'Sons of Sāsān' {Banū Sāsān}. Abū Zayd's wife, therefore, is identifiable with a popular character known in the underworld argot of the Banū Sāsān as al-kudda, that is, the wife in the trickster duo who frequented mosques,<sup>19</sup> while Abū Zayd is her accomplice, the poor 'blind' man {al-istīl}.<sup>20</sup>

The viewer is linked to the pair by the pointing finger of the preacher, while the row of turbans emphasises the outstretched postures of the begging couple.

Al-Ḥārith stands at the left hand side in the mosque, hand to mouth, and anxious to make the acquaintance of the person who had woven "the rich tissue of these verses"<sup>21</sup> but unable to move forward because of the pressing crowd. His hand gesture was taken over from Byzantine painting and is commented upon elsewhere; it also appears on a late 7th/13th or early 8th/14th century candlestick in Istanbul, where it seems to indicate a conversation.<sup>22</sup> Al-Ḥārith is shown in three-quarter profile with the feature of the 'protruding eye'; this device also occurs in Coptic illustration.<sup>23</sup> It is not until later in the tale that al-Ḥārith suspected "that Abū Zayd was indicated by all this",<sup>24</sup> and his "sorrow was excited for what had befallen his eyes".<sup>25</sup>

The congregation comprises a tight group of six men in the

foreground. Four of them watch the couple, while the two others turn their heads towards the preacher; this has the effect of hinting at depth in the composition, and these people comprise part of the crowd who "had become such as to be well-nigh suffocating".<sup>26</sup> Their robes are of one colour and in shades of red, pale blue, smokey-grey, pale saffron, pink/violet and dark green. Folds and patterns are gently delineated to suggest that the materials were fine.

Turbans are in a variety of these colours; two of them are white; these belong to the two men who are turned towards the khaṭīb, and they emphasise further this compositional device. All the turbans have extremely long waist-length ends, with ṭirāz bands. White turbans also occurred in Paris B.N. 5847, in the first tale,<sup>27</sup> and later, in the cemetery;<sup>28</sup> white is uncommon for turbans in the Maqāmāt and, as has been pointed out, it seems to have been employed to draw attention to a specific feature.

Generally speaking, the tail {'adhaba} of the turban measured four fingers in length, and any increase was regarded as ostentatious,<sup>29</sup> but one should bear in mind that these people were both seeing and being seen in all their finery on a great public occasion. There may be a parallel here with the well-dressed women in the Rayy mosque on f.58v of this manuscript, who are discussed in the analysis of "Women in the Mosque".<sup>30</sup>

Al-Ṣābī described a typical 'Īd scene of worship in Rusūm dār al-khilafā' or Rules and Regulations of the 'Abbāsīd Court; shortly after sunrise on 'Īd al-Fiṭr the people, also clothed in their best garments, gathered in the mosque and performed the two raka'āt of prayer led by the Caliph or his appointee, and the alms of the Fast

{ṣadaqāt al-fiṭr} were distributed. <sup>31</sup> This was followed by much house-visiting of relatives and friends, the mutual expressions of good wishes and the exchange of gifts of clothing and cash. <sup>32</sup> Ramaḍān was, and still is, a time of the greatest hospitality and the wearing of new garments. Another source reveals how a wazīr, Ibn 'Abbād, entertained several thousands at this time and gave away more that month than he did throughout the remainder of the year. <sup>33</sup>

Several features indicate that this an official occasion. The pair of black 'Abbāsīd standards which flank the khaṭīb are twisted like silken skeins. It is likely that the fabric bears epigraphy, for they are identical to the furled standard borne by a horseman on the opposite folio, which is clearly inscribed in white. The finials of the flag poles are also identical in both illustrations. In Chapter V of Rusūm dār al-Khilafā', al-Ṣābī outlined the types of banners which were given to princes on their appointment; these bore pious inscriptions on both sides, and mentioned "The upholder of Allah's command. The Commander of the Faithful". <sup>34</sup> I have been unable to find literary references concerning banners placed on the minbar.

Al-Wāsiṭī's preacher is clad in the black robes which al-Ṭabarī tells us stamp him as an 'Abbāsīd appointee; <sup>35</sup> the sleeves are wide and bear deep golden ṭirāz bands on the upper arms. Ibn al-Athīr reported that when an official sought to be inconspicuous he removed his black clothing. <sup>36</sup> The black turban with gold ornamentation here is quite different from those of the congregation, and it is perhaps fastened with a form of gold clasp. Ibn Iyās reports that "the" black turban was known also as the "Baghdādī" turban. <sup>37</sup>

In his right hand the khaṭīb clasps, a black encased sword of



office. Ibn Jubayr described the preacher in the Cairo mosque in Salāḥ al-Dīn's time as dressed "after the fashion of the 'Abbāsids", namely wearing black and girt with a sword.<sup>38</sup> One wonders if the appearance of the sword in the minbar is associated symbolically with the gadīb or staff upon which the Prophet leaned; this practice was adopted by his immediate successors and emulated for some time elsewhere.<sup>39</sup> Al-Jāḥiẓ had earlier mentioned that a mikhṣara or staff {and turban} were indispensable for a khaṭīb.<sup>40</sup>

If the amīr was in the capital at the time, his name was not invoked. Adherence to this practice was strictly enforced, for in the mid-4th/10th century al-Rāḍī bi-Allah dismissed and replaced three senior Baghdadi clerics who mentioned the name of the amīr, Muhammad ibn Yāqūt, immediately after the invocation of the Caliph himself.<sup>41</sup> The presence of standards and black official garments on a festival day all suggest that this khaṭīb is preaching as the official representative of the amīr.

One might compare this khaṭīb with the preacher in al-Wāsiṭī's Samargand mosque illustration in Maqāma 28, reproduced overleaf for comparison only. The Samargand khaṭīb wears a girdle {minṭaqā}<sup>42</sup> encrusted with jewellery and with two clasps of gold or silver, which is perhaps an additional item of rank.

There are two further points; first, the position of the miḥrāb relative to the minbar is technically incorrect, for the preacher is at the left, and secondly, there are no banners on the Samargand minbar on that **ordinary** Friday. This latter point tends to confirm that the banners in the Barqa'id mosque on 'Īd al-Fitr hinted at 'Abbāsid officialdom.



intrude to an unacceptable degree at the centre of the miniature. The reduction in scale of the minbar in general allows the inclusion of both minbar and mihrāb; it focuses attention on the famous preacher and the black standards which emphasise the festival, and provides a decorative backdrop for the drama. The whole structure has been swung round 90°, perhaps to counteract the somewhat flat effect of the six men with their backs to the viewer, but it also directs the glances of two of them to the khatīb. There is no canopy at the head of the stairs. It should be noted that, like the mihrāb, the minbar curiously lacks inscriptions.

The portal is further distorted, for it has been swung round 90° to echo the mihrāb {although its arch is pointed}. It serves to emphasise the preacher and underscore both the official setting and the gall of Abū Zayd and his wife by putting them, in a sense, on a par with the preacher. A minbar was constructed in two distinct sections; the first is the tall, box-like structure on a square base, which is composed of three horizontal divisions {s. taqfīsa} per side.<sup>43</sup> The upper taqfīsa forms the balustrade and the lower portion carries the platform. The tall rectangular side panel flanking the platform is elaborately decorated with polygonal wooden insets {hashwash}<sup>44</sup> which are carved in a variety of geometrical patterns. The upper part of this panel has been repainted, but the decoration has not been restored. It may be that the black panel has also been repainted, and that the true effect would be similar to al-Wāsiṭī's minbar in the Samarqand mosque, reproduced above.

The second section is the large triangular side which carries the staircase; it has been elaborately worked in a floral arabesque



similar to that on the mihrāb, and it contrasts sharply with the geometric designs of the hashwash. It is not possible to see how many stairs there are here. Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi's Al-Iqd al-farīd mentions a plank fastened to the top of the minbar of the Prophet at Medina, to prevent anyone else sitting there.<sup>45</sup>

Abū Bakr sat one step down from the Prophet's stool, and 'Umar chose one step below that.<sup>46</sup> 'Uthmān, however, later in his caliphate, chose to preach from the top. Mu'āwiya raised the Prophet's minbar six additional steps.<sup>47</sup> It seems that the practice of sitting lower than the Prophet's place was never officially prescribed, and it was ignored on at least one occasion before the 6th/12th century.<sup>48</sup> Here, the khatīb stands below the topmost step.

There are eleven balusters, some of which appear to be carved; the banister and other parallel sides are known in Iraq as kifsīj,<sup>49</sup> and they, too, are devoid of pious inscriptions. The various sections of the structure were joined by iron brackets with iron nails, and examples of these are clearly found on the 'Amādiya minbar,<sup>50</sup> although al-Wāsiṭī has omitted them. Nails on a door from the 'Amādiya mosque were in the form of an eight petalled rosette, which was a popular contemporary motif,<sup>51</sup> and other decorative nails had been popular in Sāmarra.<sup>52</sup>

We will study al-Wāsiṭī's Rayy mosque in Maqāma 21 in the context of an Arab governor in Chapter 3; although he shows the preacher seated on the minbar, that structure is set off-centre, and has no handrails, entrance portal or canopy, and no mihrāb appears.<sup>53</sup> The position of al-Wāsiṭī's mihrāb to the left of the minbar is correct. This possibly accounts for the placing of what, strictly

speaking, in both textual and chronological sequence, should have been the first illustration, viz., the mounted cavalcade, after the ‘Īd al-Fitr sermon, facing to the right.

Al-Wāsiṭī has produced a mosque interior in a fairly simple form. It is devoid of an architectural framework, but the requisite features of mihrāb and minbar set the scene. This format was to be greatly expanded as he worked through the range of 50 Maqāmāt, as seen, for example, in his Samargand above. <sup>54</sup>

The main focal point, the mihrāb, is set slightly off centre; this mihrāb takes the form of a semicircular niche known as {mujawwaf}. <sup>55</sup> The mihrāb mujawwaf first made its appearance during the reconstruction of the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina by the Caliph al-Walīd and the governor of ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz in the early 2nd/8th century. <sup>56</sup> It is still unclear whether a mihrāb existed in any mosque before this time, <sup>57</sup> and its niche form owes much to late antique decoration. <sup>58</sup> Whelan believes that the mihrāb mujawwaf "represented a genuine formal innovation in the mosque". <sup>59</sup> Since its inception the mihrāb mujawwaf has been the focus for the imām leading the prayers, and its primary function is liturgical. <sup>60</sup> Its symbolical focus is perhaps comparable in meaning to the symbolism of the address from the minbar.

Al-Wāsiṭī's mihrāb is an elaborate structure composed of several different panels deeply carved in various styles, with a double row of crenellations, and all of these features accord well with the associated symbolic values of the mihrāb and its commanding position in the mosque. Similar crenellations appear on buildings throughout this Paris B.N. 5847 manuscript. <sup>61</sup> Crenellations are unusual in the

context; the only other example of a similar mihrāb that I could find was in the illustration of this tale on f.25 of the London B.L. or. 9718 Maqāmāt manuscript.<sup>62</sup> There, too, the archway was rounded, and not the more usual slightly pointed four-centred arch found elsewhere at the period.<sup>63</sup>

In al-Wāsiṭī's fairly simple ‘Īd al-Fitr mosque, it is plausible to view the crenellations as the suggestion of a cross-section of the mosque itself, in the absence of fuller architectural elements, such as are found in the Samarqand mosque. However, al-Wāsiṭī also added crenellations to his Samarqand mihrāb, where they echo the frieze. Crenellations perhaps appear for their decorative effect and to mitigate flatness in the composition.

Generally speaking, the ‘Irāqī mihrāb at this time was executed in brick, stucco or marble<sup>64</sup> but al-Wāsiṭī apparently shows his prayer niche in the red wood of the minbar. A wooden mihrāb, 6'6" high and dating from 497/1103 is found in the Masjid-ī-Maidān, Abyaneh,<sup>65</sup> and it is reasonably close in scale to that of the illustration.

The absence of pious inscriptions has been remarked upon.<sup>66</sup> The inset ochre-coloured panels may be terracotta; these apparently were frequently designed and fabricated to defined dimensions and proportions for a particular building.<sup>67</sup> They were placed on panels with a fixative {juss}, which was applied only on the back of the terracotta piece.<sup>68</sup> Contemporary terracotta decoration was also applied in the form of tiles known as shashsha.<sup>69</sup> Examples are found in Baghdād on the mausoleum popularly known as Siṭṭ Zubayda, built by al-Nāsir and dated 575-622/1179-1225,<sup>70</sup> as well



as on al-Madrasa al-Mustanṣiriya.<sup>71</sup> All of these elements feature fairly simple, pleasing floral scroll patterns.

It should be pointed out that I have found no parallels for a mixture of wood and terracotta. Alternatively, the insets were carved in a different variety of wood, for decorative purposes, or else al-Wāsiṭī rendered the separate areas in different colours for decorative effect.

Only one of the two pillars for the mihrāb arch is visible; its bell-shaped capital appears to be constructed in the grey/blue soft marble which was plentiful in the Mosul region and lent itself to elaborate carving;<sup>72</sup> al-Janabī says that this technique in marble represented an unbroken artistic link between the earlier stuccowork of Sāmarrā and the Saljuq brickwork of Baghdād.<sup>73</sup> Al-Wāsiṭī depicts grey/blue pillars in other mosques, where these columns have both bell-shaped capitals and bases.<sup>74</sup> Similar capitals are found in the Leningrad S.23,<sup>75</sup> and the theme was also taken up in Egypt.<sup>76</sup> Bell-shaped capitals occur on actual structures; for example, in the niche of the main mihrāb in the Mosul Great Mosque.<sup>77</sup> That structure is strikingly similar to al-Wāsiṭī's mihrāb with two exceptions; these are the lack of crenellations and a slightly pointed, 4-centred arch.

Bell-shaped capitals are a feature of contemporary mihrābs, particularly in the Mosul area. They occur on a flat mihrab in Mosul in the Shaykh Fathi tomb,<sup>78</sup> on a mihrāb in the al-Nūrī mosque, Mosul<sup>79</sup> and on another mihrāb in the tomb of Imām 'Abd al-Rahmān.<sup>80</sup>

Ornamentation within al-Wāsiṭī's niche consists of a heart-

shaped pattern which is also reminiscent of contemporary stucco work.<sup>81</sup> It owes something to the bevelled Sāmarran style employed in woodcarving and stuccowork and represent variations of patterns on two items in the British Museum.<sup>82</sup> The Sāmarran style was also found on Egyptian buildings, particularly in the time of Ibn Tūlūn.<sup>83</sup> Like al-Wāsiṭī's minbar, that mihrāb is devoid of inscriptions.

Most of the Maqāmāt illustrators have experienced difficulties in accurately portraying the correct physical relationship of minbar to mihrāb; this may have been due to lack of expertise in exploring pictorial space within the confines of a folio. Alternatively, because the minbar in real life is so prominent and monumental a feature, it might tend to overshadow the setting, and the issue is therefore evaded by painters.

The exception is the artist of the very badly-damaged B.L. or. 9718, who has produced a mosque interior for this 7th tale. This is the only Maqāmāt illustration where the two elements are correctly depicted, with the niche to the left of the pulpit. His preacher seems to be on a throne-type of minbar, facing the viewer.<sup>84</sup> A further point is that he alone follows al-Wāsiṭī and shows a rounded mihrāb niche, although it almost verges on the horse-shoe shape.

The Paris B.N. 6094 artist sets his minbar sideways-on to the left of his compositions in Maqāmāt 21 and 28; these illustrations are reproduced for comparison only, together with the London B.L. or. 1200 Samarqand jāmi' in Maqāma 28. The B.L. or. 1200 artist has followed al-Wāsiṭī's example and spread his composition over two

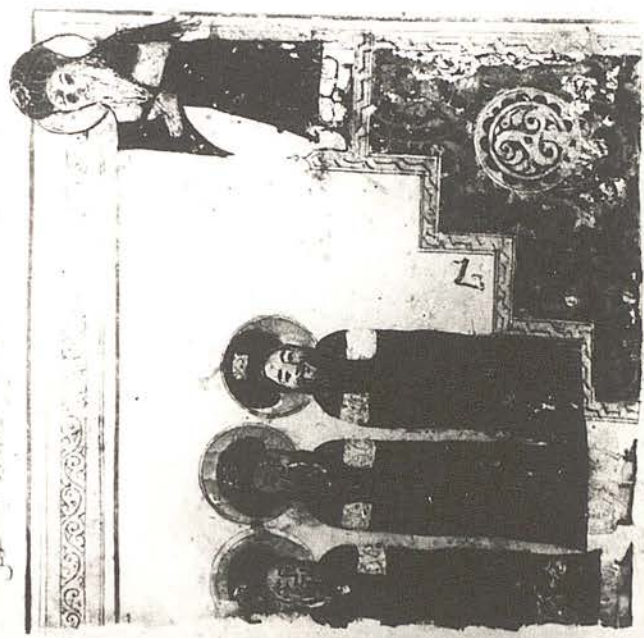
pages, as well as omitting the mihrāb.

Paris B.N. arabe 6094, f.64v:4D12, Mq. 21.









f. 85v. 5F4



f. 86r. 5F5

Al-Wāsiṭī has produced a striking image which leaves one in no doubt that this is a jāmi' of the period, but, without the miniature on the opposite folio, a reading of the text and evidence concerning banners on the minbar, there is nothing to suggest that it took place on 'Īd al-Fiṭr, for his Samarqand worshippers are equally well-dressed.



i. {b} The military band {tabl khana<sup>2</sup>}.

We turn now to al-Wasiṭī's second half of the Ramaḍān double-page spread, the unique festival cavalcade on f.19, reproduced earlier beside f.18v. The three lines of text above it continue Abū Zayd's castigation of his wife, and also record al-Ḥārith's ensuing conversation with the woman when, in reply to his insistent questioning, he learned that "the man is of the people of Sarūj", <sup>85</sup> viz. Abū Zayd.

The red commentary at the left hand side refers to the horses {khayl} and it draws attention to the Qur'ānic metaphor in the opening words of the tale, when al-Ḥārith tells how he was determined to witness the festival ritual to mark the breaking of the fast on a day which "brought up its horses and footmen", <sup>86</sup> that is, its pomp and ceremony. This evocative image seems to have fired al-Wasiṭī's imagination. The miniature is not quite centrally placed on the page, for there are three lines of text above and two below.

The dialogue correctly runs on from the text of the mosque scene; the intervening text of alliterative poetry in an appeal to the congregation for alms has been ignored by the artist as a possible location for the image, as well as a prose section and

another short piece of poetry. 87

The caption runs ...

"{'Fie upon thee} Shall we lose the net as well as the prey,  
And the wick as well as the brand to light it with?' ...  
So she began to retrace her steps, and seek the scroll ...  
I said, 'If thou desirest the burnished and engraved, thou  
must reveal a matter which is as yet a secret'." 88

If al-Wāsiṭī's inspiration did lie in the earlier Qur'ānic allusion, then it is clear that the miniature is misplaced in the text, for this mounted group has evidently assembled to announce that the breaking of the fast is to be officially sanctioned, and presumably a fanfare is about to be played. Strictly speaking, it should therefore have appeared on the right hand folio, with the mosque interior to its left.

Ettinghausen reasonably suggests that because al-Wāsiṭī, as calligrapher, could have inserted the illustration in the correct context, at the beginning of the maqāma, it was not necessarily created for this volume, 89 but might have been copied from another manuscript. 90

However, there does seem to be a plausible alternative explanation. Al-Wāsiṭī laid out his pages with care. His title headings were in large thulūṭh script, and lines of poetry were usually centred, although this is not the case in the Barqa'īd mosque miniature. Chapters did not necessarily start on a fresh page, and equal, larger spacing than usual, was generally left between headings and narratives, both above and below the title, for example in his illustration on f.11v, 91 where the title of the 5th Maqāma appears in handsome gold thulūṭh between two lines of naskhī text.

Al-Wāsiṭī may therefore have concluded that he was unable to make the visual impact he sought, due, perhaps, to a necessarily "top heavy" introduction, for the reference to the pomp and ceremony of the occasion is very close to the beginning of the tale.

Four mounted horsemen, three of whom hold standards, are in the company of three musicians. All the riders wear Arab turbans, and four of them have Semitic features. Three of the men at the left hand side have almond-shaped eyes. Two of these riders bear black pennants, and the furled black standard of the 'Abbāsids is also borne aloft; perhaps their non-Arab appearance is significant, in that they are representatives of the court, where foreigners were employed, and they may have been modelled on Turkish figures in royal iconography.

Despite the exhortation to joyful celebration, the standard bearers have rather glum faces, and they display little of the sense of joyful anticipation which one gathers is everywhere evident on this occasion.<sup>92</sup> This is understandable in light of the effects of a rigorous month of self-denial, for the Prophet said, "Fasting is one half of endurance" and "Endurance is one half of the faith",<sup>93</sup> and their faces do reflect this aspect of Ramaḍān. Further, like the Muslim pilgrim, the observer of Ramaḍān should remain in suspense between fear and hope, since he does not know if his fast will be accepted.<sup>94</sup>

Al-Ṣabī has described the elaborate preparations of caliphs, wazīrs and other high-ranking officials to celebrate the commencement of the 'Id.<sup>95</sup> He recounts how they assembled at dawn in colourful procession, splendidly attired, and set out from the



residence of the wazīr or military commander, making their way through the city to the muṣallā.<sup>96</sup> This scene could represent such a group and, in the absence of architecture, they may have gathered either at a setting outside the official's residence or outside the city walls.

Muṣallā is literally "a place of prayer", but it could also mean a large patch of bare ground, usually outwith the city bounds.<sup>97</sup> Apparently it had a qibla wall and an open air minbar. In other words, a muṣallā had the function of a mosque reduced to the barest essentials.<sup>98</sup> Muṣallā might be interpreted as a place in general where one might pray, but where it was not recommended to say Friday prayers.<sup>99</sup> It would be a suitable site for an official retinue to gather to announce to the populace that the long month was over, and the dry uncultivated earth with minimal vegetation which forms the groundline in the illustration suggests such a setting. The two images might well be identified by the Muslim reader in the ʿĪd al-Fiṭr context.

All the men wear the turban {ʿimāma}, which is shown in hues of gold, russet, green, grey and white. As far as one can see, the turbans have a fairly short piece of winding cloth, for the endpieces do not hang down over the shoulders, like those of the congregation in the mosque. This tends to suggest that the men are officials, for the preacher wears similar headgear in his capacity as an appointee of the state.

The standard-bearer at the extreme left and the trumpeter in the centre of the illustration may be wearing a midraʿa which al-Layth and the Qāmūs describe as "a certain garment {a tunic} like

that called durra'a, never of anything but wool." <sup>100</sup> Al-Wāsiṭī's rendering may be a sartorial compromise, for the standard-bearer's orange robe is clearly split across his saddle, yet it has no obvious chest fasteners, and the buttons and loops of the Egyptian version noted by al-Maqrīzī are not illustrated. <sup>101</sup> Instead, a gold-coloured belt secures the garment, and its roundel design hints at a Persian influence. This belt may identify the wearer as the most senior member of the group.

The trumpeter in the centre wears a similar tunic, while the other members of the procession are wearing the gamīs, which was a simply-made type of shirt of varying length with a round neck-hole and no opening at the front. <sup>102</sup> According to the Sharī'a, the gamīs should have been long, <sup>103</sup> but Ibn al-Ḥajj reported that in the 8th/14th century it frequently reached the knees. <sup>104</sup> One sees clearly that the kettle-drum player, whose white trousers {sarāwīl} <sup>105</sup> are tucked into his boots, is wearing a waist-length gamīs. This outfit would afford him greater mobility in striking the pair of kettle-drums than the tight-fitting coat which has been described above, and it would also be more expedient on account of the larger saddle and saddleboard of his mule.

Sleeves had become wider in the 3rd/9th century, during the reign of al-Musta'in, and al-Mas'ūdī later described sleeves as measuring three hand spans. <sup>106</sup> The fashion curiously reached its apogee as the Caliphate's power plummeted, and al-Raghib wryly observed that when the tall hat {galansuwa} became very long, turbans extremely elaborate and sleeves too wide, the people would perish. <sup>107</sup> Al-Wāsiṭī's illustration shows shifts with both narrow

and wide sleeves, so an element of personal preference or practicality may be evident here.

Al-Wāsitī has employed a bright palette for his costumes. Robes of orange, brown, dark green, gold and shades of grey are distinguishable, and they aptly recall the text's "Arrayed, agreeably to traditional practice, in new apparel".<sup>108</sup> In the mediaeval period, textile production rivalled that of steel and other metals today,<sup>109</sup> and fine garments commanded enormous prices. For example, al-Ṣābī reported that the highest category of khilla or robe of honour which was presented to a regional governor in earlier days might have cost 300 dīnārs; in the 'Abbāsid period, they were much more costly, due to the fashion for jewelled embellishment.<sup>110</sup>

Fine clothing is mentioned in works of belles-lettres, and the implication must be that it was the apparel of the leisured class. Al-Washshā' had earlier produced several chapters on types of clothes worn by contemporaries, including a section on "The dress of the elegant: the costume affected by men of position",<sup>111</sup> while al-Tha'ālibī included a list of elegant clothes in the context of the Buwayhid court in his Latā'if al-Ma'ārif.<sup>112</sup> Even among the poorer classes, clothing was not cheap, for a pledge document from the Cairo Geniza dated c.609/1213 itemises several garments which were pawned for the not inconsiderable sum of four dīnārs.<sup>113</sup>

The orange tunic falls into the category of musmaṭ, that is cloth of one colour.<sup>114</sup> The lack of highlights, other than the shading for folds on the left lower arm and right thigh, perhaps indicates that it is woollen. Other tunics seem to be made from figured materials {washī}<sup>115</sup> and may be brocade {dībāj}, which was



a cloth with both warp and weft of silk. <sup>116</sup> However, mulham, with its silk warp and cotton weft would also have a sheen. All these upper, outer garments bear tirāz bands.

The striking backdrop is composed of 5 large banners with legible epigraphy which are a triumphant confirmation of the doctrine of tawhīd or the Oneness of Allah, <sup>117</sup> and this theme will be reiterated in the khuṭba. They are likely also to contain some of the 99 names of God. <sup>118</sup> Like the black banners in the mosque, the standards have metal hexagonal finials, but there is no sign of their bearers.

These banners are rigid and must be made from a fairly robust material, and the two at the right hand side definitely bear the first half of the Shahāda or profession of the Muslim faith, for they read, "There is no god but Allah". The central grey banner also shows the word "Allah", among less legible words, and it is likely that the blue and orange banners to the left may also bear religious inscriptions. The highly decorative, ornamental type of Kūfic script employed here evolved from the 6th/12th century onwards into even more intricate patterns. <sup>119</sup>

A careful study of the word "Allah" in the top line of the orange banner reveals it to be identically written to the inscription which al-Wāṣitī has placed on f.138 in a frieze on his village mosque in Maqāma 43. <sup>120</sup> However, there the Kūfic is less floriated, for the brick or stone medium would be less amenable to elaboration than cloth.

There are three possible interpretations of the fabrics used for this backdrop. If the banners are of cotton, they were painted

with a brush or stylus, using stencils or blocks, and outlined in lighter hues or white.<sup>121</sup> Linen, which originated in Egypt, is an alternative explanation; it was not until what Kuhnel terms "dynastic times" that pigments which did not dye the fabric, but merely coated the surface, were employed.<sup>122</sup> The third fabric may be wool, with a woven inscription.

A very long standard with pseudo-epigraphy at the left hand side acts as a frame and counterbalances the furled 'Abbāsid standards on f.18v; both of these devices close the extremities of an extremely large double page spread. Al-Wāsiṭī has carried this long banner well up the page, out into the margin and past two lines of text, and this represents an early instance of invasion of the margin. Such experimentation is possible in the absence of a ruled frame.

The black furled banner is the standard {'alāma or rāya} of the 'Abbāsid caliphs. The Qāmūs and Tāj al-'Arūs also describe 'alam as the ornamental or figured borders of a garment or piece of cloth.<sup>123</sup> It is significant that the root of this word means "to know", for this confirms the notion of the standard, like the ṭirāz, making a political and religious statement. The Book of Virtues of Baghdad of Iraq, which was written by Yazdajard ibn Mihbandar al-Fārisī for the Caliph al-Mu'taḍid in the 5th/11th century, sets out the various expenses in the caliphal palaces. Provision was made for the bearers who carried the standard at the Two Feasts, viz., the lesser feast here, 'Īd al-saghīr, and the great feast, or 'Īd al-kabīr, at the end of the pilgrimage.<sup>124</sup>

These men are perhaps paid officials of the state. The

furled banner appears to be silken and the epigraphy is white. Given that this is a Caliphal emblem, the inscriptions may have been applied by silk tapestry weaving; they seem to read "Allāh". The finial of the pole is hexagonal in shape and it is apparently made from pale grey metal; it would presumably be inscribed, but no inscription is evident.

The black pennants, which are fringed {hashīya}, <sup>125</sup> are possibly silken, and they sport ṭirāz at their ends. The pseudo-epigraphy on the pennants generally resembles that on the very long black banner. The ṭirāz on that long banner, to an extent not possible on garment folds, fulfils exactly al-Muṭarrīzī's 6th/12th-century definition of the arabicised Persian word which meant "even measurement". <sup>126</sup> A plausible reading of the epigraphy which runs the length of the field in a repeating motif is "Allah", if one sees the final letter of God's name as a very decorative evolution of the Arabic. This long banner might have been woven in the manner of a woollen carpet with a heavy fringe of coloured cottons and a gold field.

Tirāz bands not only feature on all the men's garments and the banners but even on the mule's grey felt saddlecloth {libda}. <sup>127</sup> This cloth in turn covers another thinner cloth known as mirshaḥa; <sup>128</sup> as the name implies, the mirshaḥa absorbed the animal's sweat; <sup>129</sup> Both these items are placed below the saddle, which in the case of a mule or ass was known as bardha'a. <sup>130</sup> The ṭirāz of the grey libda provides a foil for the striped dark grey pattern on the felt. As the most prominent animal in the parade, such a decorative covering for the mule is appropriate, although it

may also serve the more plebeian task of covering the wooden boards which bear the weight of the drums.

It is unlikely that the ṭirāz, which appears on such a profane item, would carry any religious invocation, so its appearance here may be a purely decorative device on the part of the artist. A similar, smaller saddle cloth, also in light grey, with an abstract pattern, is clearly seen below the horse saddle which the Qāmūs designates "sarj",<sup>131</sup> but it is unadorned by ṭirāz.

Al-Wāsiṭī shows the remainder of the paraphernalia of riding in some detail. One clearly sees the bridle {lijām}, which Ibn Durayd's Book on the Saddle and Bridle describes as encompassing the bridle or headstall and reins, together with the bit and other appurtenances which were made from iron, silver or thong.<sup>132</sup> No silver has been used in the miniature. The shakīma al-lijām or bit is defined by the Qāmūs and Ṣiḥāḥ as "the transverse piece of iron in the mouth of the horse".<sup>133</sup>

The mule's grey girth {hizām}<sup>134</sup> is plaited. Here it has to support the not inconsiderable weight of the boards, and should therefore be strong. Undated remnants of mediaeval girths have been excavated at Fustāt;<sup>135</sup> these were double-woven from wool and consisted of two separate weaves of coloured wools which formed interchanging geometrical patterns.<sup>136</sup> They were produced with shafts and heddles, that is a series of vertical cords or wires.<sup>137</sup> Girths were in wide use throughout the Near East, and examples from Ḥimṣ were exported and sold in 8th/14th century Cairo.<sup>138</sup> Ḥizām is also used for a belt.<sup>139</sup>



The grey horse in the foreground has no girth; this is surprising, but girthless horses were depicted even in 8th/14th-century cavalry manuals; perhaps this was to develop greater powers of control. <sup>140</sup> A two-stranded breast strap is attached to the pommel at the front of the saddle. <sup>141</sup> Stirrups appear to be brass and are probably made in one piece; these riders, unlike the riders in the cavalry manuals, <sup>142</sup> wear no spurs.

The kettle-drums {nagqārāt} <sup>143</sup> have a footed base and they are supported on a daffa or wooden board at either side of the beast. The nagqāra or kettledrum is beaten with two drumsticks which, through use, become bent at the ends; it is still used in Morocco. <sup>144</sup> The daffa is dark blue and elaborately carved; its upswept shape matches the pricked-up ears of the mule, as well as providing another link with the illustration on the opposite page.

Drums played an important part in religious festivities and, as well as forming part of the spectacle of a band and functioning to keep the populace awake during the long hours of the Fast, they were an extremely effective means of communication and a verification of the ruler's might. Significantly, the verb tabala, "to drum" also has connotations of propaganda and the inference may be that these men are people of some official standing. The drumsticks are probably wooden, with a small round knop, and the same type of drum and drumsticks persisted in Turkish military bands until at least the early 12th/18th century. <sup>145</sup>

The musicians' group includes two trumpeters. Jenkins and Olsen say that the trumpet nafir is a long harsh-sounding single reed instrument. <sup>146</sup> Here, it appears to be of brass; a knop is

clearly seen on one instrument, and both have decoration on the stem and at the fluted opening. The interior of the instruments is reddish in colour, but there is no way of knowing if this is artistic licence.

Similar musical instruments are found on the water clock in al-Jazarī's roughly-contemporary Kitāb fī Ma'rifat al-Handasiya.<sup>147</sup> The nafīr was used with with double reed instruments and kettledrums in the military context, and it is found in Turkish, Persian and Moghul manuscripts.<sup>148</sup> Trumpets had been in widespread use throughout the Mediterranean world since metal-working was introduced.<sup>149</sup>

Both trumpeters have their instruments upraised and at the ready for the announcement of the beginning of the ʿĪd. It may be that the kettle-drummer's mule is of a more even temperament than a thoroughbred horse and less liable to be upset by the vibrations and noise from the drums, the raucous trumpet blasts and the excitement of a large crowd. Mules are also stronger than horses, and the combined weight of the drums and wooden side supports might be too much for the average horse.

Al-Wāsiṭī later depicts a kettledrum player in the Caliphal cavalcade {ṭabl khana} in Maqāma 31 as a camel-rider,<sup>150</sup> and the theory regarding weight and strength tends to be confirmed from a relatively modern illustration of a Turkish military band, where the kettle-drums were on camels, Al-Hārith is seen mounted on an almost identical brown mule, facing in the same direction, in Maqāma 25, and al-Wāsiṭī may have used the same model on both occasions.<sup>151</sup> Mounted trumpeters have also survived from Egyptian

shadow play figures; one was a horserider, while the other was mounted on a mule. <sup>152</sup>

The mule and the horses in the miniature are realistically depicted and have an intelligent and almost anthropomorphic sensibility which appears to render them independent of their masters. Thus they have more character and appear to be from a less formulaic mould than, for example, those found in a slightly earlier illustration from Baghdad in the Book of Farriery of 606/1210. <sup>153</sup>

The horse and rider on a late 6th/12th-century lustre dish from Kāshān still betray a rather stiff heraldic quality {as does the floral decoration}. <sup>154</sup> Al-Wāsiṭī's animals are perhaps symptomatic of a new realism in painting. The tail of the grey horse is plaited at the end, although the others hang loose. In the case of cavalry horses, the tails were looped and tied back on themselves, <sup>155</sup> and one wonders why in that instance they were not simply cut, for practical reasons.

Close examination of the miniature reveals that, although there are seven horses and the mule, only seven riders are depicted. Further, it seems that al-Wāsiṭī has had to make room in the composition for the trumpeter in the centre, for he cannot be sitting on any of the three mismatched horses at the right hand side; he sits both behind and to the left of the kettle-drummer. This would allow the inclusion of the trumpet within the limitation of the width of the page and would also reinforce the balance of the composition and provide a link with the mosque illustration. In order to make this less obvious, the artist seems to have chosen

deliberately to 'blend' the trumpeter in with the grey banner at the centre by making his durra'a a similar shade of grey.

The massed heads of the four horses at the left hand side emphasise patience, as does the solid phalanx of banners in the background. Anticipation is hinted at by the upward sweep of the elaborate {daffa} carrying the drums; this in turn is echoed in the pricked-forward ears of the mule. The upraised trumpets and banners counterbalance the horizontal rows of horses and banners, and these elements allay any sense of monotony arising from the horses' legs in the foreground. One has the feeling from this vivid illustration that the musicians and the restive horses at the right hand side have sensed that the long wait is almost over.

Von Grunebaum's description of the instantaneous reaction to the announcement of the ending of Ramaḍān as an "indescribable outburst of noise", <sup>156</sup> as all the tensions and austerities of the month dissipate in preparation for several days of rejoicing, therefore seems apt and entirely predictable in al-Wāsiṭī's context.

A similar massed phalanx of riders is found on a polychrome glazed tile from Kāshān, <sup>157</sup> which is now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, but the treatment of the theme there is very different. Gone is al-Wāsiṭī's preoccupation with the human drama. The tile composition is necessarily circumscribed by its "star" shape and the impersonal, static quality in the over-large oriental features of the personages is characteristic both of Kāshān and mīnā'ī pottery. <sup>158</sup> The major factor lies in the



difference in iconography, for whereas the Maqāmāt miniature reflects the interest in everyday Arab life, the Kāshān tile depicts a Shāh-nāma theme, the Persians leaving the fort at Furūd.

The choice of subject matter in the Maqāmāt and the realistic artistic style noticeable in these two miniatures may throw some light on the question of the reason for the popularity of the tales, the nature of their audience, and also on that of patronage; just as Persian artists were patronised by the court, namely the subjects of the illustrations, the artists of the Maqāmāt manuscripts may have been commissioned by the bourgeoisie.

As scribe and artist, al-Wāsiṭī was aware of the context, so he is once more taking an original leap of the imagination to illustrate the "attendant circumstances", that is the ceremonial rites of the festival, and to exert his prerogative to determine exactly the placing of his miniatures. He has executed two contemporary scenes which would, in conjunction, be readily identifiable to his mediaeval audience. Further, the underlying sentiments of Ramādān are as valid today as they were at that time, and I consider that his appeal, on this occasion at least, is therefore timeless.

## ii. The hajj

In Maqāma 31, the narrator tells that while he camped at Ramla, which was an important town between Jerusalem and Jaffa, "I found there a caravan of camels preparing to depart {by night}, with loads being girded on, in readiness to go to Mecca".<sup>159</sup> Despite his earlier predilection for wandering in the course of his business, "well knowing that foreign travel replenishes the stores, and generates a constant increase of prosperity"<sup>160</sup> al-Ḥārith was sufficiently inspired by the pilgrims to disregard his business "to gain a sight of the holy wall" at Mecca.<sup>161</sup>

As his party dismounted at Juhfa, a lone figure appeared to them from the hillocks and fired their imagination by promising to tell them what conduct would save them on the Day of Judgment. The old man climbed up on a rock and delivered an edifying sermon first in rhymed prose and then in verse on the true nature of the pilgrimage.

Al-Wāsiṭī has provided two illustrations in this tale which combine in an impressive double page spread; f.94v shows a mounted procession, while f.95 features an elderly man preaching from a rock to a more motley crowd of pilgrims.



f. 94v: 6E2



f. 95: 6E3

{a} The maḥmil procession

The first painting appears at the point where Abū Zayd reiterates his earlier theme of the true nature of pilgrimage and his castigation of the other pilgrims. The illustration is placed below two lines of narrative, which read,

"{Then he raised his voice loud enough to make the deaf hear,}  
And almost to shake the mountain-tops, while he thus indited:  
    'The Hajj is not to journey day and night  
    With camel choice and litter richly dight ...'" 162

The text continues with a reproach to the pilgrim band.

An exegesis of al-Harīrī's text down the right-hand side includes an alternative verb for the 8th form of the verbal noun of the infinitive "to select, to prefer", 'amiya,<sup>163</sup> which seems to refer to the pilgrims' mode of travel; the commentary forms a decorative outer frame, when taken in conjunction with what may be a similar commentary on the accompanying illustration.

This image is unique in the Maqāmāt cycle. A group of men mounted on camels is accompanied by a horseman and two footmen. Two men carry aloft standards bearing black pennants with ṭirāz bands and pseudo-epigraphy; a third, vertical, standard is perhaps being borne by one of the trumpeters. Although at first glance these standards appear to be made from black fringed silk with applied bands of ṭirāz, one wonders about the fringes.

In his section on the "Turkish lands" in the Laṭā'if al-Ma'ārif al-Tha'ālibī {who died in 1038} mentioned the use of hair from the shaggy coat and the tail of the yak at the end of flagpoles and spear shafts;<sup>164</sup> al-Wāsiṭī's banners may have been



trimmed with this material. The nature of the fabric, the meaning of tirāz and the possible political significance of these flags has already been discussed in detail in relation to al-Wasīṭī's Ramaḍān procession.

The length of the standard seems to have remained consistent since the 7th/13th century, for Lane's description of religious processions last century says it is "a pole about twenty feet in length, like a large flag-staff ... with a large conical ornament of brass on the top." <sup>165</sup> However, the standards here have a hexagonal-shaped grey metal finial like those in the Ramaḍān group; they may be of steel. It is possible that these hexagons bore inscriptions. Hilāl al-Ṣabī described the flag-pole of an earlier 'Abbāsid period which mentioned the name of the Commander of the Faithful, 'Abd Allah ibn Ja'far al-Imām al-Qā'im bi 'Amr Allāh, invoked God's aid, and pledged the ruler to God's cause. <sup>166</sup> Indeed, the outlining of the hexagons in off-white suggests that there would be inscriptions.

Trumpets and kettle-drums comprise the band's instruments. The form of trumpet here appears to be a type of karna, which was a raucous double-reed instrument used in the context of outdoor military music. <sup>167</sup> The drums are different in shape to those played by the Ramaḍān group; they are long and cylindrical and not wide and tapering. Here the drumsticks are club-shaped. Three are fairly rigid, but one is more flexible, and they are possibly made of leather.

The musicians and standard bearers wear similar Arab robes with gold tirāz bands bearing pseudo-epigraphy on the sleeves. No

definite patterns can be made out, although folds are delineated and texture hinted at by gradations of tone and delicate outlining in a contrasting colour. The folds perhaps indicate that a fairly fine material was used. No patterned textiles are shown, and this apparent lack of interest in pattern for its own sake here seems common in Paris B.N. 5847. This suggests that al-Wāsiṭī's primary concern lay rather in the context of the tale and the human drama being enacted.

A similar disregard for textile pattern occurs in the contemporary Vargā va Gulshah manuscript by 'Abd al-Mu'mīn <sup>168</sup> where human interest and realism are also in evidence, and where the same techniques for folds and texture are employed. A comparison of textile and other patterns in, say, the later Mamlūk Vienna A.F.9, reveals how an emphasis on ornamentation there led to a static quality of human representation and a notion that many of the miniatures could be interchangeable, regardless of the story. <sup>169</sup>

Al-Wāsiṭī's palette included blues, dark green and gold for the garment fabrics, and the turbans are shown in shades of russet, violet and blue. Definitions of the turban as a "badge of Islam" {simāt al-islām}, and "a divider between belief and unbelief" {ḥājiza bayn al-kufr wa'l-īmān} <sup>170</sup> are particularly apposite here, in the context of a religious festival. Al-Wāsiṭī may have chosen colours without regard to the conventions of the day, when Jews, Christians and other members of the protected dhimmi class wore distinctive, prescribed colours. <sup>171</sup>

Mayer points out that it should not be forgotten that "in

manuscripts of the Mamluk period Muslims are depicted as wearing yellow, red and blue turbans". <sup>172</sup> Other Maqāmāt illustrators appear also to have used colours normally associated with the dhimmi class. <sup>173</sup> It seems that the regulations concerning dress were renewed from time to time <sup>174</sup> and that legislation affecting the Ahl al-dhimma was not always consistently enforced and remained "ink on paper". <sup>175</sup> Under al-Nāṣir ibn Qalāwūn in the 8th/14th century Samaritans were directed to wear red, Jews yellow, and Christians blue headbands. <sup>176</sup>

One unusual feature of costume which has not been noted before in Paris B.N. 5847 is the white sash falling from the right shoulder to the left hand side of the waist of the kettle-drummer in the green robe. This garment may be a wishāḥ, which was worn by both men and women; according to the Miṣbāḥ, it should properly be worn over the left shoulder and under the right arm, <sup>177</sup> and this is presumably to allow freedom of movement for the right hand, which is ritually clean. Al-Wāsiṭī's wishāḥ may be artistic licence, to follow the thrust of the trumpets and pennants in their emphasis of forward movement.

The three men in the foreground are dressed quite differently from the musicians and flag-bearers, and they wear blue knee-length tunics with gold ṭirāz bands on the sleeve. At least two of the robes, that of the horseman and the man on foot at the right foreground, open from the neck to the waist and they are similar to the type of garment known as durra'a, which has already been discussed in the analysis of al-Wāsiṭī's Ramaḍān miniature.

In the absence of drapery, one presumes that a heavier



material, perhaps wool, was used for these clothes; this is confirmed by al-Layth and the Qāmūs {and elsewhere} which say that the durra'a was "never of anything but wool".<sup>178</sup> Al-Wāsiṭī therefore appears to have reproduced contemporary garments. The footmen men also wear a plain gold-coloured belt or girdle {mintaḡa?<sup>179</sup> and striped stockings or leggings with hoops of gold and cream and purple and violet. The leggings may be muzāj, which Dozy defines as an Arabicised Persian word.<sup>180</sup> Muzāj differ from jurāb or jawrāb, which were socks worn beneath shoes or boots,<sup>181</sup> and here they clearly resemble spats and cover the footwear. Muzāj were made in wool, silk or leather.<sup>182</sup>

The leading member of the group walks before the horseman and carries a staff with a knop. His companion brings up the rear and his staff on his shoulder supports a dark green and gold-coloured cloth bag; perhaps this contains provisions, or at least the wherewithal to purchase them en route. The bag might also open out into the table-cloth or simāt which occurs in Paris B.N. 3929 in Maqāma 25,<sup>183</sup> and is unique in Maqāmāt miniatures; it is reproduced in the list of illustrations for B.N. 3929.

Both footmen wear a conical hat, which is unlike the musicians' heavy, round turbans; this may be the dānniya,<sup>184</sup> so-called in the dialect of Iraq because it was similar in shape to the long tapering wine jar or dānn. Sartorial fashions vary according to place and era. For example, while al-Tabari reported that the galansuwa with turban formed the only mark of sovereignty in al-Mutawakkil's time, the 3rd/9th century,<sup>185</sup> al-Musta'īn, who succeeded al-Mutawakkil, confined the wearing of the dānniya in



the same century to judges, because it had become so popular with the masses. 186

By the 7th/13th century, we see Abū Zayd wearing the galansuwa with his turban in Paris B.N. 3929, and it appears elsewhere in Maqāmāt manuscripts. 187 The horseman possibly wears a tall dark galansuwa beneath his blue turban; this is not entirely clear, as the base of the camel saddle is behind his head. He sports light knee-length riding boots.

The musicians and standard-bearers have Semitic features; the exception is the beardless youth, who has an East Asian cast of countenance and resembles people in a slightly later 7th/13th century work from Mosul, the Vienna A.F.10 Kitāb al-Tiryāq. 188 The three men in the foreground are possibly Saljūq Turks, and their different headgear reinforces this aspect.

A novel element noted on the face of the leading footman is what Ettinghausen terms the "protruding further eye", 189 a curious feature of Western Indian painting {which also appears in Ethiopian art}; 190 Chandra sees this device as representing the gradual replacement of the three-quarter view by the profile. Al-Wāsiṭī has employed this convention on several other occasions 191 and it also appears in the Leningrad S.23. 192

Perhaps the artist deliberately sought to accord prominence to the lone grey riderless camel by depicting the other four camels as the ordinary, workaday sand-coloured riding beasts {ru'āhl}. 193 There is none of the splendid selection of varieties of the species here, such as the fleet-footed red and very valuable Mahrī camel from Yemen which is included in the herd of camels that formed the

reward of the singer in Maqāma 32. 194

The chestnut horse bears all the necessary paraphernalia and trappings of horsemanship which have been discussed elsewhere and which can be observed in Kitāb al-Tiryāq manuscript in Vienna.<sup>195</sup> These items can also be noted in other art forms, for example on a Mosul candlestick;<sup>196</sup> on mīnā'ī pottery,<sup>197</sup> a beaker in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington,<sup>198</sup> and on a Kāshān polychrome glazed tile.<sup>199</sup> In those media, too, the horses and their trappings have been carefully observed and realistically portrayed.

A grassy knoll defines the outdoor setting on two distinct planes. The horizontal ground line consists of vegetation where the grass is fairly hazily defined. It is punctuated by a variety of stylised plant forms with flowers which may here serve as "space fillers" or as compositional markers, for they appear precisely between the horse's legs and then between the horse and the two characters who travel on foot. The same device of the crossing-over of two plants may also be observed in the London 1200<sup>200</sup> and Paris B.N. 3929 Maqāmāt manuscripts.<sup>201</sup> However, it is not seen in Paris B.N. 6094 where, on the five occasions where vegetation appears, it is in the form of a highly-stylised tree and closely packed grass bands.<sup>202</sup>

The stylised grass band on the right-hand side of the illustration accords fairly well with Nassar's description of "small, obliquely-placed, fleshy leaves, packed close together",<sup>203</sup> which she noted in contemporary Saljūq manuscripts and Syriac manuscripts of the same period.<sup>204</sup> In none of these manuscripts does there seem to be an interest in landscape features as such;

they are used as a compositional device or to indicate an outdoor setting.

Al-Wāsiṭī's division of the composition into two registers by a grassy hill occurs in this tale and elsewhere in his manuscript, <sup>205</sup> as well as in Maqāma 36 in Istanbul E.E. 2916, <sup>206</sup> and again in Maqāma 39 in Leningrad S.23. <sup>207</sup> The convention of animals appearing from outcrops of landscape prefigures Persian miniature painting. <sup>208</sup> Al-Wāsiṭī has set his two disparate pilgrim groups apart by several means, viz. the two registers; the different styles of costume; the diverse modes of travel and the physical characteristics of the men. Perhaps these elements represent a deliberate attempt to highlight each group, and one must seek to define his motives.

The horseman may simply be a high-ranking person of means who is travelling in style, or he is possibly enjoying high patronage, as was Ibn Baṭṭūṭa <sup>209</sup> while on an excursion in Turkey in the 8th/14th century. However, there is an alternative interpretation.

Samadi has described the cortege of the Caliph, which appeared on Fridays when he presided over the community prayers and on festive occasions, as "unusually impressive". <sup>210</sup> The ṭabl khana<sup>c</sup> or imperial band marched before him with banners unfurled, trumpets blaring and the beating of drums. Instruments included the trumpet {naḡīr}, the drum {daff}, the tambour {ṭabal}, fifes {shabāba} and the hautboy {zamūr}. <sup>211</sup> Several of these instruments persist in a Turkish military band from an early 12th/18th century painting, <sup>212</sup> and they do have connotations of pomp and ceremony.

During the later Mamlūk period, apart from the Sultan, the

military officers and the governors of 5 Syrian provinces, there was a further category of ṭabl khanā' amīrs {of forty Mamlūks} who were entitled to be accompanied by a band. <sup>213</sup> Military bands, then, have more than an air of officialdom about them, and the most important personage here, the horseman, may be a government official who was appointed by the Caliph himself.

As the spiritual head of the Faithful, the Caliph had to meet out of the privy purse {among other things} the expenses of the ḥajj. <sup>214</sup> The official in charge of the pilgrim contingent was known variously as amīr al-ḥajj, <sup>215</sup> mihtar or ra'īs, <sup>216</sup> and among his duties this official directed the journey, supervised the conduct of the pilgrims and led his particular group in the ḥajj ritual. <sup>217</sup> This post was obviously both a privilege and a great responsibility, for al-Ṭabarī reports that the person was appointed by the government at a ceremonial gathering of the Caliph, the Chief qāḍī and his deputies and other dignitaries. <sup>218</sup> One would therefore expect him to travel with a retinue under the patronage of the ruler.

Ibn Baṭṭūta recorded his own experience thus,

"I left Baghdād with the maḥalla of Sultan Abū Sa'īd, on purpose to see the way in which the king's marches are conducted, and travelled with it for ten days, thereafter accompanying one of the amīrs to the town of Tabriz." <sup>219</sup>

This interpretation is given credence if the grey camel bears what is commonly known as a maḥmal. Strictly speaking, the term should be maḥmil, as defined by the Ṣiḥāḥ, Mughrib, Miṣbāḥ and the Qāmūs, <sup>220</sup> and this term will be used in the interest of accuracy. Mediaeval dictionaries give its primary significance as "a place of



bearing or carrying". <sup>221</sup> Al-Fayyūmī's 8th/14th century Miṣbāḥ says it is the kind of vehicle known as hawdaj, <sup>222</sup> and consisted of a pair of panniers which bore two more or less equal loads with a small tent.

Perhaps significantly, the 6th/12th century Mughrib describes the maḥmil as "the large hawdaj termed ḥajjājī" <sup>223</sup> which, of course, places it in the specific context of the Pilgrimage. The object borne by the grey camel has a conical, domed cover, an almost drum-shaped frame with pommels, and possibly gold ornamentation. It is draped in a soft golden-coloured silky fabric, and it is adorned with three black pennants identical to those carried on the three standards in this painting.

These seem to hint at 'Abbāsid officialdom and that this is a state-sponsored group of pilgrims who are escorting the official maḥmil. The problem is what, if anything, was carried in this maḥmil?

Opinions differ as to the origin of the maḥmil procession. Al-Suyūṭī credits the Mamlūk Sultan al-Baybars, who ruled from 1260-1277, with the organisation of the Egyptian maḥmil on a systematic and permanent basis, <sup>224</sup> and Ettinghausen <sup>225</sup> agrees with Jomier <sup>226</sup> that Baybars was the first ruler to dispatch a maḥmil as a political symbol. <sup>227</sup>

This opinion is reinforced by the fact that Baybars was renowned for his zeal and religious orthodoxy, <sup>228</sup> and this particular maḥmil cavalcade would make both a religious and a political statement. Baybars ruled some 20 years after al-Wāsiṭī executed this manuscript. The Syrian prince, Abū'l-Fidā', recorded

that Sultan al-Mālik al-Nāṣir was attended by 60 amīrs of ṭabl khaṇā' rank when he undertook the pilgrimage in 720/1320. <sup>229</sup>

In the 7th/13th century the maḥmil became a symbol of sovereignty and independence <sup>230</sup> and not only the Egyptian but the Syrian, Iraqi and Yemeni caravans brought maḥāmīl to Mecca and 'Arafa. <sup>231</sup> Royal power is underlined in al-Wāsiṭī's illustration by the accompanying black flags of the 'Abbāsid caliphate. The maḥmil thus seems to be symbolic of the power and dignity of the respective countries.

According to Gaudefroy-Demombynes, the maḥmil which accompanied the Syrian pilgrim contingent was not only smaller than its Egyptian counterpart but it had a domed top. <sup>232</sup> One must assume, then, that the object on the riderless camel is the Syrian maḥmil, because we know that the incident took place at the Juhfa of the text, <sup>233</sup> which Steingass says was

"a station on the Pilgrimage, between Madina and Mecca, where the pilgrims from Syria assemble." <sup>234</sup>

If this is so, then al-Wāsiṭī's illustration may well be the only extant example of the official **Syrian** maḥmil.

There may be a correspondence between the mediaeval maḥmil and the pre-Islamic tribal qubba, which was a small, domed tent of red leather housing a sacred stone {"or two"} and had the function of a portable sanctuary <sup>235</sup> or tabernacle, and Ettinghausen considers that it also embodies the widespread Near Eastern notion of the symbolisation of authority by an unoccupied seat. <sup>236</sup> In addition, there may also be a connection with the Jewish Ark of the Covenant.

Ettinghausen correctly points out that because the text in

Maḡāma 31 gives the plural of maḡmāl, viz., {maḡāmīl}, <sup>237</sup> this indicates that the author, al-Ḥarīrī, clearly "does not have in mind the later specifically political use of the word". <sup>238</sup> If this maḡmil is an official symbol with a political meaning, then the puzzle is to identify al-Wāsiṭī's model or source for the maḡmil illustration, for this miniature appears to pre-date any known literary source, and there is what Ettinghausen terms a "dark" period of more than 600 years from the Prophet's time in the apparent lack of historical evidence. <sup>239</sup>

One knows that al-Wāsiṭī frequently took an original leap of the imagination in his interpretation of the text, but Ibn Baṭṭūta and Ibn Jubayr <sup>240</sup> have left their accounts of pilgrim caravans, without apparently referring to an **official unoccupied** maḡmil, or at least to the political-symbolical aspect. For example, Ibn Jubayr says in Al-Riḥla,

"The most remarkable of these hawdaj that we noticed were that of the Sharīfa Jumana, daughter of Fulayta and aunt of the Amīr Mukthir, which drew a long train over the ground, and those of the harem {sic} of the Amīr and the harem of his principal officers, as well as other hawdaj whose number we cannot record because of the impossibility of counting them. On the backs of the camels these hawdaj appeared as raised pavilions, and the beholder would conceive them to be an encampment with its pitched tents of every lively colour." <sup>241</sup>

A 6th/12th-century painting in the Cappella Palatina, Palermo, 'The Two Camel Riders', conveys the notion of riding in a procession, and the second figure is clearly a woman in a tent-topped litter. <sup>242</sup> Again, these camels face to the left. However, none of these litters in any way approximates to al-Wāsiṭī's maḡmil, and the personal nature of the litters is emphasised. Unfortunately, it is impossible to say what al-Wāsiṭī's source was,

or whether whether the practice of sending an empty, politically significant maḥmil to Mecca was instituted before the time of Baybars.

The dynamism created by the forward thrust of trumpets and flags in the miniature reflects the sense of triumph on arriving in the Hijāz and anticipation of the approach to Mecca, the Mother of Cities, which is evident in the text.<sup>243</sup> Al-Ḥārith's description of his companions,

"Whose rapidity in travelling was like the current of a flood, and alacrity for the good work like that of swift steeds"<sup>244</sup>

may also have fired al-Wasīṭi's imagination in his attempt to capture the mood of the occasion. That there is a sound reason for this urgency, and for the exultation on the arrival at sacred territory can be gleaned from Ibn Battūta's account of the hazards which would have faced earlier Syrian pilgrims, where he describes the rigours of his own caravan from Damascus which set out on 1st September, 1326.<sup>245</sup> One reads,

"From Tabūk the caravan travels with great speed night and day, for fear of this desert. Halfway through is the valley of al-Ukhaydir, which might well be the valley of Hell [may God preserve us from it]. One year the pilgrims suffered terribly here from the samum wind; the water supplies dried up and the price of a single drink rose to a thousand dīnars, but both seller and buyer perished."<sup>246</sup>

There is nothing in the text to suggest that al-Ḥārith either saw or travelled with an official caravan, and so the artist's inspiration seems to have lain in his association of the annual departure of a caravan amid great pomp, and the contrast with the theme of the harangue of the pilgrims by the half-naked Abū Zayd.



ii. {b} The pilgrims

Al-Wasitī's second miniature, on f.95, occurs just after the text on f.94v, and the four lines of Abū Zayd's speech read,

"Thy generous aid to all who need a friend.  
Such true religion must thy hajj contain,  
Or else abortive prove, and end in vain:  
For know that utter loss alone requites  
The pilgrimage of heartless hypocrites;  
They plant, but on the soil no fruit is found;  
Their toil by no reward or praise is crowned;  
Though sore distress and exile they endure,  
They vainly hope advantage to procure;  
Their only gain is but to doom their name  
To justly-merited reproach and shame." <sup>247</sup>

A very small incomplete portion of the textual commentary appears in the margin at the top left hand corner. The painting encapsulates a moment earlier in the text, when al-Ḥārith said that "no sooner had we made our camels kneel down, and loosened the ropes wherewith their loads were bound" <sup>248</sup> than the old man appeared from among the hillocks.

Abū Zayd stands on a rock to address the pilgrims. Although he is bareheaded and unshod and may therefore have started to undress and change his clothing, he does not conform to the description of "a person stripped to the skin". <sup>249</sup> Abū Zayd's pale blue robe {gamīs} with long sleeves falls down to mid-calf. Mediaeval sources describe the gamīs as a well-known type of sewn shirt or shift with two sleeves and an opening down the front, of linen or cotton, but never of wool. <sup>250</sup> By definition, as a "sewn" garment, it cannot be worn by the person in a state of ritual consecration

{iḥrām}. Over his gamīs he wears a russet shawl with black and white stripes which must be the shamla, which is described by Serjeant as a "striped blanket".<sup>251</sup> According to al-Fayyūmī, this was very thick and made of wool or goats' hair.<sup>252</sup>

The shamla is draped decoratively over Abū Zayd's forearms in a stylised manner, and it serves to draw attention to him and to link this illustration with the cavalcade on the preceding page. It also lends a sense of balance to the two illustrations. There is no sign of any other of Abū Zayd's belongings, and he must have travelled austerely, eschewing the comforts of al-Hārith's group. Abū Zayd thus exemplifies his paradigm,

"He whom his daily morsel satisfies,  
Alone is blest in life and truly wise".<sup>253</sup>

Al-Hārith is not readily identifiable among the surrounding group of pilgrims, who are largely attentive to Abū Zayd's harangue and who listen in the "silence" of the text;<sup>254</sup> even three of the four camels at rest have their heads upraised. This may be a compositional device to counterbalance the downward slope of the hillock, or it could be an amusing diversion, for camels are notoriously intractable beasts. None of the other people is in iḥrām.

One youth at the right hand side turns away and faces the miniature of the military band; this not only provides a visual link across the two folios, but perhaps affords al-Wāsiṭī the opportunity to experiment with the 'protruding eye' and the gradual replacement of the three-quarter view by the profile. Grabar considers that this turning away from the central event by this

figure, and the man peeping out of the black litter, represent a rare feature and are a misunderstanding of the theme. 255

The majority of the pilgrims are Arab, and they do not appear to be travel-stained or weary. They wear Arab robes with tirāz. Their turbans have very long endpieces, which indicate that much material was used and that the wearers are likely of some means, for Ibn Khallikān, in his contemporary Biographical Dictionary, {Wafayāt}, described the eminent 4th/10th-century grammarian al-Nahhās as

"a man of sordid habits, parsimonious and niggardly towards himself; on being given a turban-cloth, he would cut it into three out of avarice". 256

Once again, costume and turbans are of the hues found throughout this manuscript, viz., gold, russet, white, pale blue and violet. Three of the characters wear what seem to be black fur caps. I have found no identical headgear elsewhere, but several varieties of fur cap can be seen in the Demotte Shāh-nāma. 257 As two of the youthful pilgrims, who include one wearing a fur cap, are of non-Semitic and East Asian appearance, these factors suggest a far-eastern influence, possibly through Persian painting, and perhaps they were modelled on youthful attendants at court. All the youths wear Arab robes with tirāz, and two of them have turbans.

Al-Wāsiṭī has portrayed the two aḥdāj {sing. ḥijj} of the text. Al-Layth described ḥijj as

"a certain thing upon which the women of the Arabs of the desert ride ... not a hawdaj". 258

This appears to be confirmed by Steingass's rendering of ḥijj as

being equivalent to the miḥaffa,<sup>259</sup> which mediaeval sources in turn describe as

"a vehicle of the kind used by women like the hawdaj, except that it has no qubba or dome-like, or tent-like top".<sup>260</sup>

It was so called, according to Ibn Durayd, because the frame of wood with the pieces of cloth attached surrounds the sitter on all sides.<sup>261</sup> These aḥdāj therefore conform exactly to the dictionary definition, although the camel saddle {qatab}, and two girths {biṭān}<sup>262</sup> which support the litter are not shown. One final point needs noting here, and that is that the panniers would obviously be balanced across the camel-hump by conveying a person on each side.

Visual confirmation that the hiḥj was a form of transport for women is found in the lower frieze of the mid-7th/13th century Vienna A.F.10 Kitāb al-Tiryāq<sup>263</sup> and on a metal ewer in the British Museum dated 629/1232.<sup>264</sup> Both of these works were executed in Mosul, and on each the camel trappings are depicted. An open litter which conforms to Ettinghausen's "dome-shape" and bears a woman, occurs on a Fāṭimid ivory which is now in Cairo; this camel, alone of the examples noted, faces to the right.<sup>265</sup>

Figures, who are possibly female, are depicted in a litter on a 7th/13th century lustreware figurine of a camel from Kāshān or Sava.<sup>266</sup> That litter has a crenellated crosspiece; presumably one might drape a hanging over this, in the manner of a ridge tent, for privacy.

Al-Wasīṭī's illustrations appear to indicate that both



occupants are inside one compartment, but this could not be the case. A correct, end-on rendering of the hijj is illustrated in the Leningrad S.23 in Maqāma 4 <sup>267</sup> which, incidentally, also carries men. A single person, of indeterminate sex, is borne on a litter within a medallion on a contemporary Syro-Mesopotamian tray in Cleveland. <sup>268</sup>

Ibn Battūta also provides an insight into his personal experience of a pilgrim caravan as he tells us how, on his arrival at Mosul en route to Baghdād, he joined one. <sup>269</sup> He does not say whether that litter was covered, but he makes it clear that it was for two people. At Baghdād he

"found the pilgrims preparing for the journey, so I went to visit the governor and asked him for the things which the sultan had ordered for me. He assigned me the half of a camel-litter and provisions and water for four persons, writing out an order to that effect, then sent for the leader of the caravan and commended me to him. I had already made the acquaintance of the latter, but I remained under his protection and favoured by his bounty, for he gave me even more than had been ordered for me." <sup>270</sup>

Again, the "half" confirms that one person was borne on each side of the beast.

It may be significant that in the Cappella Palatina painting mentioned in the discussion of the accompanying folio, the Wāsiṭī, Kitāb al-Tiryāq and metalwork depictions all the camels face to the left, for this perhaps points to a common source.

One must ask why al-Wāsiṭī has shown four men in litters which seem to have been associated in particular with women; it may be deliberate, to make them look ridiculous, and they do look suitably abashed. Abū Zayd and his son certainly had no qualms about

travelling in similar litters in Maqāma 4, where the painter of Leningrad S.23 has depicted them nonanchalantly conversing. <sup>271</sup>

There is also a black mahmil in the left foreground of the miniature, which is similar in shape and size to the golden-draped specimen which has already been discussed on f.94v opposite. Here it is clearly meant to be occupied, and a man's head is visible as he strains to catch Abū Zayd's speech. It fulfils the textual description of a "litter richly dight", <sup>272</sup> for it bears two sets of dark green pennants with ṭirāz and gold-coloured trappings; these are fine and could be silk. The small wooden camel-saddle to which it is fixed is also shown. This saddle must necessarily differ from those in the Mosul works discussed above, for al-Wāsiṭī's camels are the one-humped, Arabian dromedaries, while the latter are the two-humped Bactrian variety.

Al-Harīrī's pilgrims, then, were by no means unique in their choice of an easier path to the hajj than Abū Zayd, and a type of covered mahmil also appears to have been in current use, for Ibn Jubayr described the mounting anticipation of pilgrims in Mecca in 1183 concerning the preparations for the sighting of the new moon and on the morning following. <sup>273</sup> He said that this occasion was "a sight that asks to be recorded for its strangeness and wonder" <sup>274</sup> and continues,

"We saw the streets and by-ways of Mecca to be filled with hawdaj {dome-shaped camel howdahs} bound to the camels and covered with various silk drapings, and other trappings of fine linen, according to the circumstances and affluence of their owners, all of whom gave to it all the care and attention that was in their power." <sup>275</sup>

Not for Ibn Jubayr and his ilk, then, what Abū Zayd

considered the arduous path of the true pilgrim, and this is precisely the style and spirit of the hajj undertaking against which he inveighed.

Al-Wāṣītī has successfully drawn a sharp contrast between the pilgrims' worldly goods and mode of travel and the paucity of Abū Zayd's belongings as Abū Zayd sought to make them mindful of fulfilling a fundamental obligation and of taking a significant step toward the attainment of eternal bliss through self-abnegation. He has thus provided a fitting vindication of al-Ḥārith's oft-maligned friend.

In order to understand the theme of Abū Zayd's speech, it is important to consider the reality of the hajj for a great many pilgrims at that time. One might contrast the appearance of these pilgrims who have travelled in style with a relatively-contemporary description of those of the hapless less fortunate. In 1183 Ibn Jubayr described the dreadful hardship of Egyptian pilgrims, some of whom

".. stray on foot through the wayless desert and, being lost, die of thirst ... those who survive and reach 'Aydḥāb are like men quickened from the shroud." <sup>276</sup>

Their ghastly physical appearance was a salutary reminder and a "portent for those who observed carefully" <sup>277</sup> of the fate of all mankind.

Abū Zayd's eloquence seems to have been successful, for the man in the white turban at the right hand side is weeping with contrition. A touching and uncanny refrain in many biographies is

"He died on the pilgrimage".<sup>278</sup> Al-Wāsiṭī has exploited the different spatial planes which are here identified by outcrops of pale rocks, as opposed to the more usual bands of grass and vegetation which he employed for example in the village in Maqāma 43<sup>279</sup> and in the camel-slaughter scene in Maqāma 44.<sup>280</sup> He has achieved this by the skilful grouping of figures between rocks and by massing a crowd at the right hand side; their gold tirāz form a curve parallel to the rock face, while the straight lines of the litters counterbalance the curves and echo the ground-line. Finally, the black conical top of the covered litter emphasises the two highest rock surfaces and lend Abū Zayd greater prominence.

We turn now to the Leningrad S.23 manuscript, where a similar pilgrim scene appears on page 208. The text above the miniature reads,

"{He ascended a hillock} and, having first cleared his voice,  
said, 'O concourse of pilgrims who hasten on the broad  
tracks,  
Know you what is before you, and to whom you are going?  
Are you aware into whose presence you are approaching,"

and it continues below ...

"And on what a great undertaking you are venturing?"<sup>281</sup>

and Abū Zayd goes on to point out to the pilgrims the error of their ways in their approach to pilgrimage. The illustration is reproduced overleaf.





This painting, which is damaged, is therefore correctly placed according to textual requirements, and it occurs at an earlier stage than al-Wasiti's illustrations. Unfortunately, the

reproduction is poor, but it does allow an examination of the pilgrims.

Abū Zayd has already changed from his profane garments on his arrival at Juhfa before he confronts the other pilgrims, and in his austere consecrated garment he now fulfils the textual description of being "stripped to the skin".<sup>282</sup> There is, however, no indication in the text that the others had changed their clothing beyond mentioning Juhfa and "pilgrims". Grabar says that although the men in some illustrations are dressed as pilgrims, the text "does not specify that the event took place during the Pilgrimage".<sup>283</sup>

However, the text clearly states that the caravan arrived at Juhfa, a place of gathering at the entrance to the "sacred land" {al-balad al-ḥarām}<sup>284</sup> The pilgrims from Syria, Egypt and the west congregated there and prepared to consecrate themselves.<sup>285</sup> It is at Juhfa that the transition from the profane to the sacred state {ihrām} occurs before setting out for the general meeting-place of Muzdalifa, next to Mecca.

It may be that Grabar relied on Steingass's Arabic text, where there are two misprints;<sup>286</sup> both read Hujfa and apparently represent a printing error, with the dot under the 'h' omitted. Steingass describes Juhfa {although shown in Arabic as Hujfa} as "a station on the Pilgrimage, between Medina and Mecca, where the pilgrims from Syria assemble"; in addition, one of the variants for "pilgrims", al ḥujjāj, appears in Steingass's text and confirms exactly who these characters are.<sup>287</sup>

Silk and ornamented fabrics are proscribed. The prescribed

garments are preferably white <sup>288</sup> and they come under Ibn Manzūr's class of unsewn Arab costume <sup>289</sup> and are known by al-Jāhīz's designation of dithār, viz. clothes worn next to the bare body. <sup>290</sup> The ihram robes comprise the izar, which is a close-fitting wrap which falls from the waist and covers the legs, <sup>291</sup> and the ridā' or type of cloak, which the Ṣihāh and Miṣbah say is a single, uncut garment. <sup>292</sup> Unlike the drummer on f.94v of Paris B.N. 5847, whose wishāh fell from his right shoulder, the pilgrims here correctly wear the rida' over the left shoulder, to cover the back and breast and to leave the right hand, which is ritually pure, free. <sup>293</sup>

Again, there is a division of the composition into spatial planes of rocks, and what can be made out of the encampment in the foreground conforms to this artist's merchants' caravan in Maqāma 4. <sup>294</sup> People in the Leningrad S.23 manuscript are generally lively and, because they usually wear long, everyday clothing, their legs are not seen. In this particular context, the short robes and thrusting of bodies and limbs are reminiscent of poses in Byzantine art; one thinks in particular of representations of Moses on Sinai receiving the tablets from Yahweh. <sup>295</sup> These features are also discussed in Paris B.N. 6094. Such a connotation ties in with the use of the double ground plane, <sup>296</sup> and the elliptical base line, <sup>297</sup> which were employed in Byzantine and Syriac manuscripts, <sup>298</sup> and with James's contention that a significant proportion of miniatures in this Leningrad S.23 are indebted to Christian iconography. <sup>299</sup>

However, because the audience of pilgrims is jostling around

Abū Zayd, this composition, in my opinion, is less successful than al-Wāsiṭī's on two counts; first, the turbulence of milling bodies and upward-stretched arms is a distraction from the content of Abū Zayd's sonorous speech. Secondly, and more importantly, if one seeks to understand the text and the significance of Abū Zayd's sermon, Abū Zayd has now been reduced to the rank of any pilgrim which, on this occasion, he clearly was not.

Finally, we should not overlook what is probably the most touching portrait of the vindication of Abū Zayd in the whole of the Maḡāmāt miniatures. In Paris B.N. 3929, the illustration on f.68v is correctly placed much later in the tale, at the point where al-Ḥārith has realised that he "recognised the style of Abū Zayd", and said how a "thrill of joy" ran through him.<sup>300</sup> It represents a confrontation scene in a non-threatening sense, and al-Ḥārith recounts,

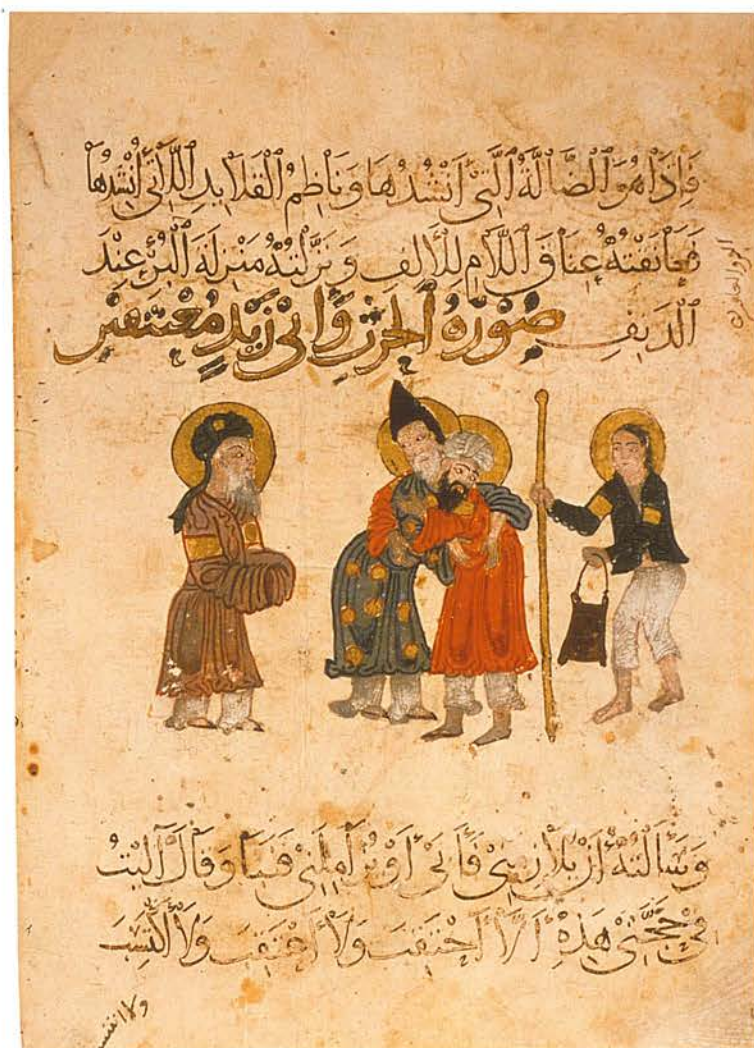
"When I saw that Abū Zayd was the object of my curiosity,  
And the man who had composed verses like a string of pearls,  
... I embraced him as closely as lam cleaves to alif  
Esteeming him as much as health is valued by the sick;  
And I invited him to join company with me; but he refused;  
Or to ride on my camel with me; but he declined the offer;  
Saying: 'I have made a vow that in this my pilgrimage  
I will neither ride on the same camel with anyone  
Nor ride or walk alternately with a companion.'" <sup>301</sup>

The caption in large gold thulūth script with black outline appears immediately above the illustration and it might have been dispensed with, for it runs,



"A picture of al-Hārith and Abū Zayd fondly embracing."

Paris, B.N. arabe 3929, f.68v:6D11, Mq. 31.



Despite the fact that the text describes him as "a person stripped to the skin", <sup>302</sup> Abū Zayd wears a calf-length crimson unpatterned robe over light trousers {sarawil}, <sup>303</sup> a pair of

leather sandals {ni'āl} <sup>304</sup> with thongs {shirāk} <sup>305</sup> and a black long pointed hat of the type known as galansuwa tawīla or galansuwa dānniya. <sup>306</sup> He is thus attired according to al-Sharishi's definition of a pilgrim in the first maqāma. <sup>307</sup> A young attendant holds his sheepskin bag {jirāb or jarāb} for dry provisions <sup>308</sup> and his staff {'asā}. <sup>309</sup> This artist has surprisingly dispensed with the traveller's waterskin.

In another context, Steingass says that "the sweat of the carrier of the water-bag is a proverbial expression for hardship and misery", <sup>310</sup> and this tends to reinforce the view that the pilgrim must undergo severe deprivation. The attendant is therefore superfluous, and has perhaps been created as a prop for Abū Zayd's belongings in order to facilitate the embrace; an onlooker appears at the left hand side, possibly to suggest the crowd. Although the youth is in Arab clothing, he is not an Arab and the artist may have adapted an Eastern court scene with a ghulām.

Lam and alif are two Arabic letters which, when written together, form lā, a particle of prohibition, <sup>311</sup> and they are particularly apposite here during a month of severe proscriptions. It is likely that the Muslim viewer would make the necessary connection when he read that the friends embraced "as closely as lam cleaves to alif".

One can well understand al-Ḥārith's anxiety as he searched for his truly penitent friend "in vain", <sup>312</sup> and one realises the meaning of the embrace on reading,

"Nor did I suffer in all my travels an affliction like this,  
Nor was visited in my journey by such poignant grief" 313

as Abū Zayd declined his proffered assistance.

Even last century, the anguish of waiting relatives is well conveyed by Lane's account:

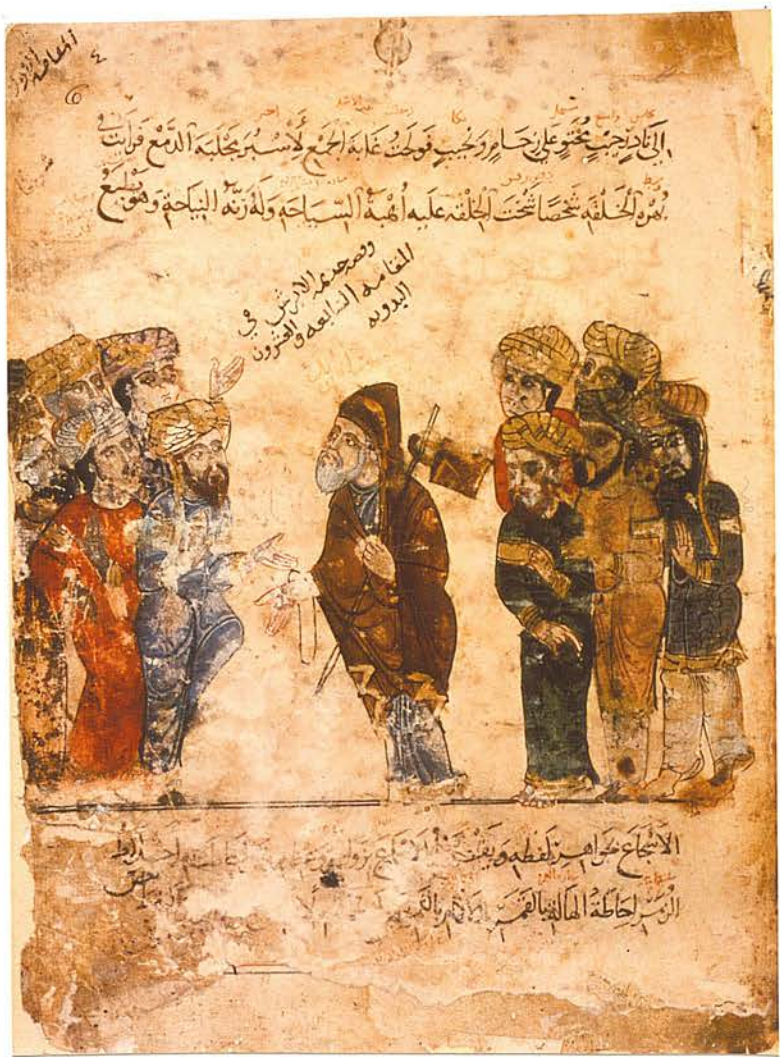
"It is very affecting to see at the approach of the caravan the numerous parties who go out with drums and pipes to welcome and escort to the city their friends arrived from the holy places, and how many, who went forth in hope, return with lamentation instead of music and rejoicing; for the arduous journey through the desert is fatal to a great number of those pilgrims who cannot afford themselves necessary conveniences." 314

There is for the discerning reader and viewer an undercurrent of poignancy here. Abū Zayd's speeches serve as a salutary reminder that before God on "the day of mutual outcry" 315 all mankind is as one and that extravagant pomp and ceremony should be eschewed, "since wealth may fail thy hope, or prove thy bane." 316

This Maqāma reveals Abū Zayd as a paradigm for all pilgrims and provides an insight into the real nature of the hajj and the plight of the less fortunate. The universality of this message to all creeds throughout every era is obvious and underlines the ongoing appeal of al-Ḥarīrī; al-Wāsitī and the artists of Leningrad S.23 and Paris B.N. 3929 have captured well the spirit of the pilgrimage.

The Paris B.N. 6094 miniature of Abū Zayd as a pilgrim, although not in the hajj context, is reproduced overleaf for comparison only; it will be noted that this is a rendering which almost approximates to al-Sharīshī's definition of pilgrim garb already mentioned.

" ... a person of emaciated frame, in the garb of pilgrimage,  
and with a plaintive voice." 317



\*\*\*\*\*



## CHAPTER 3

### POWER AND AUTHORITY

#### i. The Ruler

##### {a} The Arab Governor

Maqāma 38 takes place in Marw, in Khurāsān, and al-Hārith relates how when he was at the governor's court he came across his old friend, who was praising the quality of liberality in splendid terms. The illustration in Leningrad S.23 appears close to the beginning of the tale, and the text represents Abū Zayd's opening speech. Abū Zayd gently reminds the governor of his obligations towards his subjects, and continues,

"Truly thou has become, praise be to Allāh, the support of thy city, and the pillar of thy age, to whose sanctuary the saddle-beasts are driven, and from whose generosity bounties are hoped, to whose courts requests are carried ..."<sup>1</sup>

The illustration is reproduced overleaf.



There is an element of irony here, for Khurāsān was a byword for stinginess.<sup>2</sup> An anecdote about a merchant from Marw tells how he would not allow his son to eat cheese; instead, he merely permitted him to rub his bread on the glass which covered it.<sup>3</sup> This psychological classification of towns also occurs in the 46th Maqāma, set in Hims, which was a synonym for stupidity. As the audience must have been well aware of such connotations, their

appreciation of text and image would be enhanced. What ruler, however much maligned his province, could resist such an eloquent plea? Abū Zayd capitalised on this, and he went away "with a full sleeve and a merry heart".<sup>4</sup>

An Arabic saying runs,

"Nothing is more damaging to the subjects and more prejudicial and sinister for the king than royal inaccessibility and seclusion ... nothing impresses the hearts of the subjects and officials more than ease of access to the king."<sup>5</sup>

One presumes that, in the absence of the supreme ruler, his representative performed the same function. Nizām al-Mulk described how

"... time passed. Bahrām Gūr came out and sat on the throne and gave audience. The chamberlains took the man's hand and led him to the audience hall."<sup>6</sup>

Later in the 7th/13th century the Mamlūk Sultan Lājīn sat for two days a week in the Hall of Justice to deal with the petitions and complaints of his subjects.<sup>7</sup> Abū Zayd is therefore merely exerting his rights as a not-so-ordinary citizen, and the manuscript appears to illustrate a contemporary occurrence in an official context.

Given the status of Marw as a Saljuq capital,<sup>8</sup> and the seat of the governors of Khurāsān, one might expect to find an elaborate setting for the governor's court.<sup>9</sup> Palaces of governors or notables were apparently usually sited directly on the banks of rivers or on a main sūq.<sup>10</sup> It may be that this reception room was purpose-built in a quite separate building, for a tale concerning Harūn al-Rashīd tells how "he returned from the audience-hall to his private palace".<sup>11</sup>

Abū Zayd makes his petition with outstretched hands, and his small, slight figure is not at all intimidated by the almost monumental size of the governor. His self-confidence is matched by his eloquence. Al-Ḥārith said his friend was "in the rags of one poverty-stricken", <sup>12</sup> and Abū Zayd's pointed hood may indicate that he is dressed as a mendicant. As required by the text, Abū Zayd stands pleading in close proximity to the wālī, at "the seat of the circumciser", <sup>13</sup> which is a metaphor for closeness.

Yahyā ibn Faḍl, an 'Abbāsid courtier of the 6th/12th century, considered the mass of the people to be "filthy refuse" and a "torrent of scum", when compared to rulers. <sup>14</sup> The governor of Marw is shown here as a powerful and imposing figure. Although royal personages were portrayed 'larger than life', he seems to exemplify the ideal of the period for one of his station, viz., he has a large head {unlike that of clerk}, a thick growth of hair on the forehead, a high nose, and a broad-cornered mouth; in addition, a broad chest and shoulders, a long forearm and long fingers were all deemed desirable physical features in a figure of authority. <sup>15</sup> It is interesting to note that the artist's governor is not a **particular** governor of Marw, for an almost identical figure is found in the same manuscript for the governor of Tūs in Maqāma 26. <sup>16</sup> The inference must be that the artist was painting a **type**, without imputing any individual characteristics to the person concerned. It also seems to confirm Grabar's comments in connection with the governor in Maqāma 26 in the Istanbul E.E. 2916 manuscript that only a limited number of models existed.

The governor of Marw's black turban is the 'imāma muṣmata



sawda <sup>17</sup> showing allegiance to the 'Abbāsīd cause, and it has gold ornamentation or a gold clasp. The billowing outer cloak is of a plain deep blue, with gold braid at the hemline and neck, and this must be the sawād or robe of a single colour, with lining and collar, which formed part of the robes of honour from the caliph. <sup>18</sup> It is impossible to say whether the gold edging at the neck is on the fabric, or if it represents, perhaps, a chain of office. He is wearing a white undergarment which might be the gaba'a of fine Dābiq linen, described by al-Ṣābī, <sup>19</sup> and black sandals. These clothes were probably presented to him on his appointment, for al-Ṣābī also informs us that the military commanders were frequently presented with khilla or an ensemble of garments. <sup>20</sup> The set might also include a red-sheathed sword with silver mounts, red Sūsī cloth, armbands and a collar, among other items. <sup>21</sup>

The Ṣābī account suggests that some of these very costly garments, at least, were not necessarily ready-made, nor could they be, given the vagaries of the human shape. This is borne out by a report of a dream which a man had on the 8th of Ṣafar in 461/1068. <sup>22</sup>

"I saw in my dream as though a man had come to me and said, 'You will rise and come with me; the robes of honour have already been prepared for you ...' ... Then we entered a great palace ... Fine cloths were brought, fine linens and other such things. Then he said, 'We will call the tailor for you; he will cut, and you will wear them - God willing!' Then I awoke." <sup>23</sup>

Al-Dhahabī mentioned "attributes of power" and "presents of honour" which the Caliph al-Qā'im bestowed on Arslan al-Baṣāsīrī in the mid-5th/11th century. <sup>24</sup>

The governor's throne appears almost to be an amalgam of throne and minbar, and the back is covered in a golden brocaded fabric with large vegetal motifs. A similar textile occurs on al-Wāsiṭī's throne for the wālī in Maqāma 39, as well as on the curtains in the lower register of that miniature.<sup>25</sup> In the early 4th/10th century the throne of the Caliph al-Muqtadir was made of ebony, and covered with a Dābiqī fabric which was embroidered in gold.<sup>26</sup> We know from literary sources that al-Muqtadir had curtains of gold brocade, embroidered with gold thread and decorated with lions, birds, elephants, horses and camels.<sup>27</sup> They were manufactured in Armenia, Wāsiṭ and Basinna<sup>28</sup> and came in single colours or variegated hues.<sup>29</sup> In the Istanbul E.E. 2916 illustration for this tale, the textiles are particularly outstanding and include addorsed birds, which were rare at this early period of miniature painting.<sup>30</sup> A similar type of throne with a backcloth heavily patterned in a stylised flower motif appears in the later al-Bīrūnī Athār al-bāqiya in Edinburgh.<sup>31</sup>

Chapter IV of al-Ṣābī's Rusūm dār al-Khilafa' or Rules and Regulations of the 'Abbāsid Court, reveals that the caliph traditionally sat on an elevated seat on a throne which was covered in Armenian silk, or with a woollen and silken fabric,<sup>32</sup> and his representative in the above miniature is granting an audience in similar luxurious style. No cushions are visible. The carved wooden feet of the throne are bell-shaped; that form can also be seen on the throne in the London B.L. 1200 illustration<sup>33</sup> and on an early 6th/12th century Syrian carved wooden screen.<sup>34</sup> This bell-shaped motif is repeated in the Leningrad S.23 miniature under discussion

on the capital to the right of the governor.

Column bases with the same motif occur on the mihrāb of the late 4th/10th century al-Azhar Mosque in Cairo, and bell-shaped capitals appear in the Bahrī Mamlūk period from the mid-7th/13th century.<sup>35</sup> Columns with both bell-shaped capitals and bases occur in the late 7th/13th century Istanbul E.E. 3638 Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā.<sup>36</sup> More decorative bell-shaped columns with curvilinear zigzag bands were executed on a wall painting in al-Jawsaq al-Khaḡānī and on columns at Sāmarrā,<sup>37</sup> and they also appeared on the mihrāb of the Juwaichati mosque in Mosul.<sup>38</sup> The repetition of the same form on column bases was typical of 3rd/9th century Sāmarrā.<sup>39</sup> This motif, therefore, appears to be a long-established common architectural feature, and its inclusion here should occasion no surprise.

A large dark curtain with a deep tirāz band has been tied back to admit Abū Zayd to the reception area. Al-Ṭanūkhī recorded the visit of Abū'l-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ayyāsh to his friend, the vizier Sulaymān ibn al-Ḥasan; Abū'l-Ḥusayn mentioned

"various nobles, state-secretaries, generals and courtiers, who, not being admitted, were seated in the corridor, whilst the chamberlain was standing at the door of the staircase which led to a private chamber wherein the vizier was. When the chamberlain saw me, he ordered the curtain to be raised ..."<sup>40</sup>

Al-Ṭanūkhī also reported how his father and Abū'l-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ayyāsh had repeatedly seen the vizier 'Alī ibn 'Īsā in his latter days when his salon was crowded. The vizier was

"by an open door, leaning upon a bolster between the doorposts. A curtain was let down to reach the ground and conceal the bolsters, to screen them from the audience's view. This was because the old man wished to preserve his dignity and did

not wish to be seen having to lean on anything." <sup>41</sup>

This raising and lowering of a curtain at audiences in the 'Abbāsid period is confirmed by al-Ṣābī. <sup>42</sup> Thus the miniature represents current practice, whether at the caliph's court or in that of his personal appointee.

A well-dressed beardless youth with a black turban and long black boots stands behind Abū Zayd. His robe is of the same brocaded material as the fabric on the throne, as well as the draped curtain in the alcove, so one assumes that he is an important personage. He is lolling languidly around the framework; this is surely a device to introduce depth to the composition, for such behaviour at an official audience would have been insubordination and a dereliction of duty. If the report of al-Ṣābī on the rules and regulations concerning the appointment of a chamberlain have been applied here, this youth could not have been the chamberlain {ḥājib} for, ideally, he should have been shown as

"a middle-aged man {between thirty and fifty} wise and experienced; or a sturdy elderly man who has been tested and moulded by time." <sup>43</sup>

It may be that he was the "crier" who "summoned those who had complaints". <sup>44</sup>

Another smooth-chinned attendant in turban and boots is obviously an 'Abbāsid dignitary, for he wears a black robe and is girt with a sword. <sup>45</sup> Ibn Khaldūn reported that in the 3rd/9th century al-Mutawakkil introduced the "Persian fashion", which was to wear the sword at the waist. <sup>46</sup> The use of the nijād or shoulder strap was the typical Arab way of wearing the sword <sup>47</sup> and it is



seen to good effect in the Paris B.N. 3929 illustration reproduced in Maqāma 32 in the section on the Bedouin, where the great 'legist' addresses two tribesmen.

Al-Ḥārith sits on a small platform to the right of the composition, and nearby are three males, who are sitting on the ground. They may be petitioners, although it seems unlikely that they would be seated in the governor's presence when even his courtiers are standing; this must mean that they are waiting outside, in a separate chamber. This being the case, one should view the two alcoves at either side of the reception chamber as separate antechambers. In the composition these three figures serve to establish the ground line and to counteract the stepped throne.

The late 5th/11th century Siyāsat-nāmā of Nizām al-Mulk, the illustrious wazīr, reveals that

"There is always a large crowd of complainants frequenting the court, and even when they receive the answers to their petitions they do not go away. Any stranger or envoy, arriving at the capital and seeing this clamour and tumult, will think that at this court gross injustice is done to the people. These doors must be closed to such crowds." <sup>48</sup>

He was of the opinion that

"five persons should then come to the court, state their case, explain the circumstances, hear the answer and receive the judgment." <sup>49</sup>

These three men, together with Abū Zayd and al-Ḥārith, make up the necessary five people but it is, of course, impossible to say whether this is by design or coincidence.

The audience chamber is housed in a very elaborate building, and it accords well with one's presuppositions concerning figures of authority. A rather similar lawcourt appears in this manuscript in Maqāma 37.<sup>50</sup> In both of these tripartite compositions the separate areas are utilised as frames for the composition, and the base line is set by a yellow brick floor. The massive ornamental frieze of the central chamber features a tri-lobed foliate design; al-Wāsiṭī has produced an almost identical frieze in his Hulwān library in Maqāma 2.<sup>51</sup> Such intricate ornamentation seems to indicate that the setting in Leningrad S.23 is an official building, for it would obviously be costly.

Al-Gailanī has pointed out a variation of this design on the Sūq al-Ghazl minaret in Baghdād and on a stuccowork window grille on an angle wall in the Pīr-ī Bakran shrine.<sup>52</sup> An analytical pen drawing of yet another variation, perhaps intended for tilework and possibly dating from the 3rd/9th century, has survived.<sup>53</sup> This frieze, then, is apparently not mere invention on the artist's part.

The two small antechambers are topped with leaded and ribbed domes with clerestory windows and pointed finials, and the central chamber should, presumably, have had a large, well-lit dome though there is no sign of this. Small carved stucco panels adorn the facade of the antechambers. They are heavily carved, and it is possible that they are openwork, for ventilation purposes. Their

ornamentation seems to owe something to woodwork and moulded stuccowork dating back to the mid-3rd/9th century. <sup>54</sup>

The reader is viewing the dihlīz of the reception area, which is the antechamber or vestibule situated between the outer gate or door and the main building. <sup>55</sup> This is confirmed by the Arabic text of the description of the beggars' mansion in Maqāma 30, which this artist has depicted as a very similar tripartite composition. <sup>56</sup> He therefore repeats a fairly standard formula which is capable of elaboration by the addition of specific elements relating to occupations and the like, and this is a further shared feature with the shadow theatre. This approach may well extend to the artist's portrayal of humans, where he relies on 'types'; his portraits lack the sympathetic appeal to character, in spite of what is known of Abū Zayd's motives, which is obvious in Paris B.N. 3929 and Paris B.N. 5847.

Despite Preston's assertion that the literary content of this maqāma is "of inferior interest", <sup>57</sup> the Leningrad S.23 painter has successfully conveyed something of the contemporary ostentatious surroundings and the authority of a provincial governor. This conclusion would, of course, be possible without reading the text, and it is arguable that this is achieved at the expense of a measure of psychological insight.

One might compare this Arab governor with another in Maqāma 26 in Istanbul E.E. 2916, which follows.

فَمَّا أَتَيْتُ إِلَى  
طَلْحَمَةَ رَأَيْتُ عَلَمَهُ رُفُوفَةً وَشَارَهُ مَرْمُوفَةً وَشَيْخًا



عَلَيْهِ نَزَّ سَنِيَّةٌ وَلَدِيَّةٌ فَالْفَتْ جَسَدُهُ خَشِيَّةٌ  
فَصَبَّحَ إِلَى وَاحِسٍ الرَّدَّ عَلَى وَهَالِ الْأَحْ

This portrayal of Abū Zayd as a governor may be a misunderstanding of the text on the part of the artist, for al-

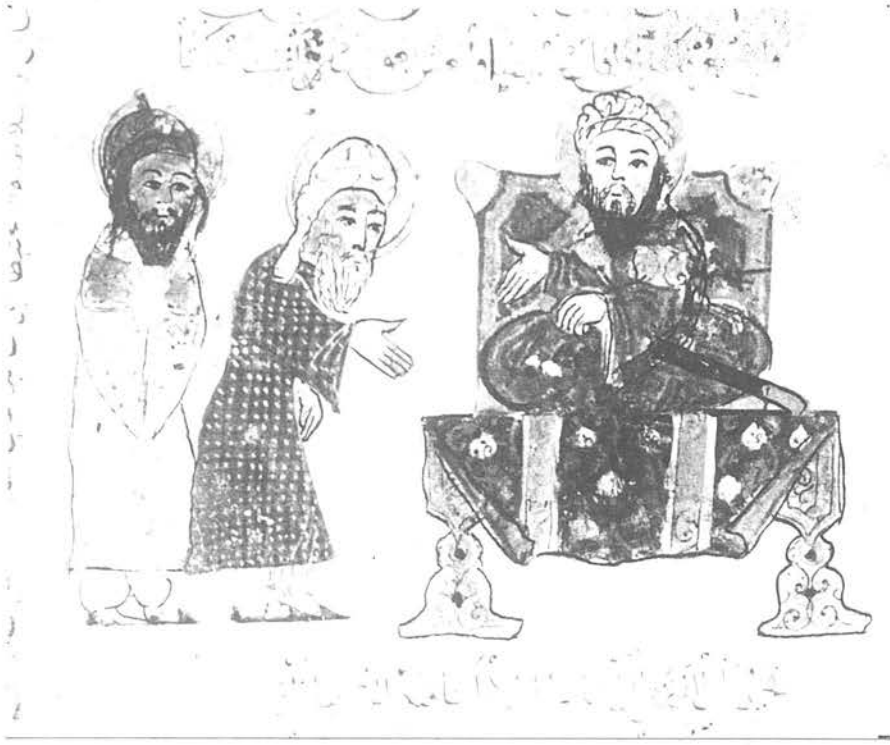
Ḥārith finds Abū Zayd living well under the patronage of a governor,

"prospering in guestship with him,  
and pasturing in the oasis of his bounty".<sup>58</sup>

Alternatively, the painter has perhaps appropriated features from a standardised princely repertoire as a metaphor for Abū Zayd's successful lifestyle. Two further examples of transformations of Abū Zayd immediately come to mind; in the 12th tale, both Paris B.N. 5847 and Paris B.N. 3929 show him drinking and clearly modelled on a 'ruler at ease'.<sup>59</sup> Grabar<sup>60</sup> suggests that such transformations are an important factor in the formation of 7th/13th century miniatures in demonstrating that a royal iconography preceded the Maqāmāt and other 6th/12th and 7th/13th-century illustrations. He goes on to caution that only a relatively small number of iconographic models existed.<sup>61</sup>

The miniature for the Marw tale in B.L. or. 1200, is shown overleaf for comparative purposes only. It represents Abū Zayd's rebuke to the governor, who is slow in making a decision concerning largesse, and its text is both a plea and a paean of praise.<sup>62</sup> A short but illegible commentary runs down the length of the left hand side of the illustration.

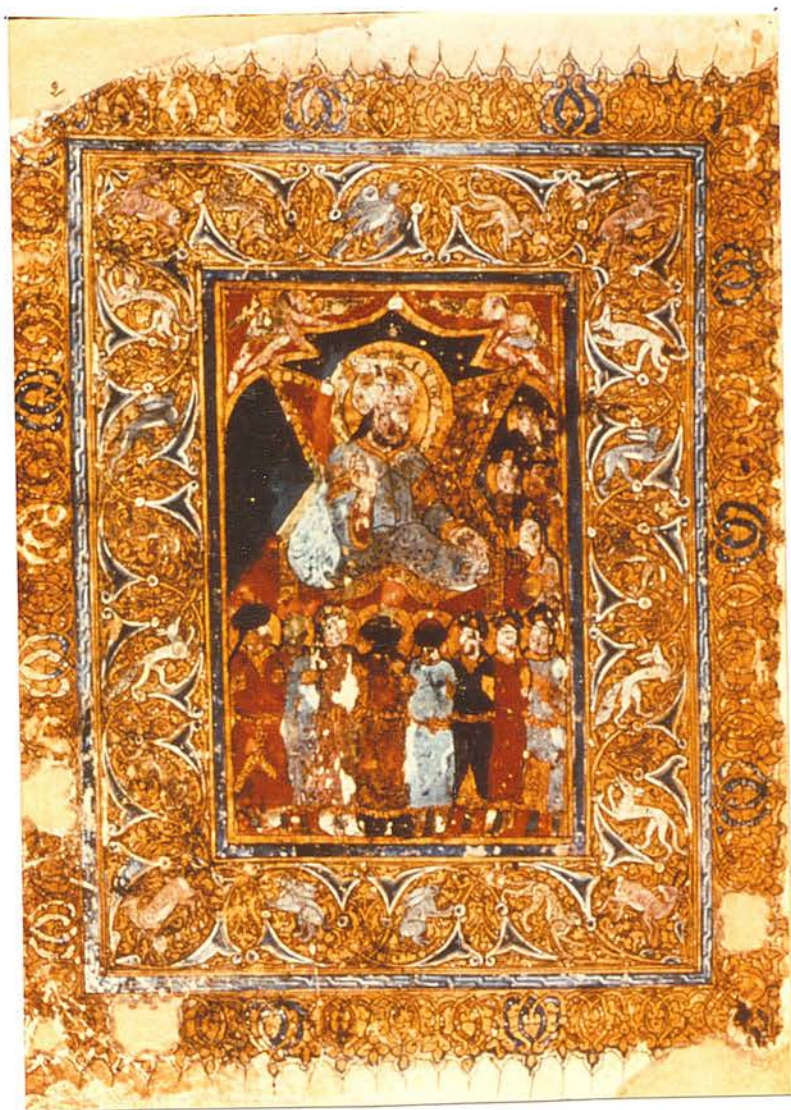




Finally, one might compare al-Wāsiṭī's miniature on f.2, one half of the frontispiece. It is the companion piece to a 'ruler' portrayed in the Saljuq manner {which is reproduced in the analysis of the double-page Rayy mosque scene in "The Saljuq Governor"} and

it seems to be based on an Arab official.

Paris B.N. arabe 5847, f.2:1A2



We turn now to governors portrayed in the Saljūq manner.

i. {b} The Saljūq Governor.

In four of the Maqāmāt <sup>63</sup> one finds that Abū Zayd has resorted to the higher judicial authority of the governor. It appears that all matters for which a qādī was considered too weak or where a more authoritative hand was required were decided in the temporal court {al-naẓar fi'l-maẓālim}. <sup>64</sup> The earlier Umayyad practice of the division of the empire into provinces under an amīr or 'amil' seems largely to have been adhered to by the 'Abbāsids. <sup>65</sup>

In theory, the governor held his post at the pleasure of the wazīr, who had recommended the appointment to the caliph, and he remained the incumbent so long as the wazīr was in office. However, in practice, the governor's authority tended to become supreme, and his office became hereditary. <sup>66</sup> Governorships were not merely bestowed, apparently, but might be purchased; in practice, for political reasons, they could be refused. <sup>67</sup>

Maqāma 10 finds al-Ḥārith in Raḥba, a town on the Euphrates between 'Ana and Raḡqa. He comes upon a crowd which has gathered round an old man, who is dragging along a handsome youth whom he accuses of killing his son. In al-Wāsitī's illustration Abū Zayd is making his plea before the governor of Raḥba, and the text above reads ...

"'Demand of him the oath.' The old man said,  
'Surely he struck him down remote from men,  
and shed his blood when alone. And how  
can I have a witness {when on the spot}  
there was {no beholder}?'"<sup>68</sup>



Abū Zayd is barefoot and fairly simply clad, despite the ostentatious, long end of his turban, and his conducting of his own plea is in accordance with established practice.<sup>69</sup> This is confirmed by al-Ṭanūkhī, who was a judge in a family of judges, for he appears to make no mention of legal advisers or advocates.<sup>70</sup>



Margoliouth presumes that a single spokesman was also employed if several parties were involved.<sup>71</sup> In matters pertaining to the community, representatives were appointed, and source material confirms this.<sup>72</sup> Legal precedents were obviously recognised, for al-Tanūkhī recalls a case where a widow "came forward eagerly as one with an answer prepared", and she referred to a case recorded by al-Jāhiz. Abū Zayd's oratorical success here is well-founded on precedents stretching back to the Graeco-Roman world, where many of the greatest examples of oratory were delivered in the courts.<sup>73</sup>

The governor has just told Abū Zayd that if he was unable to produce two Muslims to testify for him, then the boy's evidence would be heard on oath. In this, procedure differs from the court of the qāḍī, where only the plaintiff adduced evidence and questioned witnesses.<sup>74</sup> This was the theory; in practice, local custom and law seem to have prevailed. The boy refuses to take an oath, and the upshot is that Abū Zayd then dictates an oath to him.

Eventually, the governor agrees to 'liberate' the boy for one hundred dīnārs, to which Abū Zayd agrees. Presumably, some sort of warrant would be made out to a cashier, for al-Tanūkhī tells how a paymaster withheld payment of two hundred dīnārs to a female petitioner for alms, because he was unwilling to pay out such a large sum to a woman of her social class.<sup>75</sup>

Preston's 13th/19th-century sensibilities precluded publishing a translation of this tale, and he said that it was omitted "for an obvious reason";<sup>76</sup> this was because Abū Zayd deliberately sets out in the terms of the oath to make his son as alluring as possible to the governor, and the homosexual inference is clear from the text



and the painting. Despite the fact that homosexuality is proscribed in the Qur'ān, <sup>77</sup> Arabic literature confirms that its practice was fairly widespread, and al-Ḥarīrī doubtless had his reasons for his choice of theme. According to al-Balādhurī, an early Muslim ruler, who was effeminate and bisexual, was known as "the lady" {al-khudaina}. <sup>78</sup> One wonders to what extent the seclusion of women and the necessarily 'charmed circle' of court life were contributory factors.

The 'accused', a beardless youth, {shawdar}, <sup>79</sup> is well-dressed. He has the requisite drooping {saqīm} eyelids and the straight nose required by the text, and he conforms to al-Ḥārith's description of him being

"in the mould of comeliness,  
and clothed by beauty in the garb of perfection." <sup>80</sup>

He wears an extremely elaborate robe with unusual, delicate folds. Although his hair is not particularly long, the appearance of Abū Zayd's son recalls a poem which was recited to al-Tanūkhī by Abī'l-Qāsim 'Ubaidallāh ibn Muḥammad Sarūrī. <sup>81</sup> This poem provides a paradigm for youthful male attractiveness:

"{There appeared before us the jug in the hand of} a fawn,  
with a cheek that ever reddened at our gaze,  
like a maiden who when gazed at stretches out one hand  
to shield her face, and the other to replace her sleeve  
upon her heart. His locks hung down over his cheeks,  
wherein the gazelles might seem to have sewn their eyelids  
and their tongues." <sup>82</sup>

The curious "protruding further eye" <sup>83</sup> is noticeable both on the lad's face and on the governor's: this convention is a characteristic of western Indian painting from the 5th/11th or

6th/12th centuries, and it also occurs in Ethiopian painting.<sup>84</sup>

It would appear that the red zig-zag lines of text at the left hand side of the illustration are a commentary on the Arabic text, and they explain that the governor glanced in a certain way at the youth; there are homosexual connotations.<sup>85</sup> Al-Wāsiṭī presumably copied the commentary from another rendering of the Maqāmāt and here it is employed to good effect both as a framing device and as a decorative element in its own right. One wonders to what extent he was influenced by far eastern painting, where the text was written from top to bottom of the page.

It is likely that the governor is a Saljuq Turk, for there are several features in the illustration which imply this. The red beard {which might, of course be dyed, out of vanity}, moustache and hair indicate that he may not be an Arab. This is borne out by his tunic, which appears to be slit down the middle in the form of a coat, although he does wear a turban. He also wears long black boots. There is no mention of the governor's racial origins in the text.

Al-Dhahabī's Kitāb duwal al-islām tells that when the caliph al-Mustansir bi'llāh Abū Ja'far died in 640/1242-3 he was then fifty two years old and had reigned for seventeen years.<sup>86</sup> He was "fair-skinned, with red hair", and "born of a Turkish mother".<sup>87</sup> Lane-Poole said of Sultan Lājīn of Egypt, who ruled in the closing years of the 7th/13th century that his tall, imposing stature, blue eyes and ruddy complexion marked him out as a foreigner.<sup>88</sup> One has the impression that the Arabs were somewhat prejudiced towards light-eyed foreigners, which arose from the fact that many of their

northern enemies were blue-eyed. <sup>89</sup> In the 3rd/9th century al-Jāhiz had described

"the excessively lanky, thin, and reddish hair of the Franks, Greeks and Slavs, the redness of their locks and beards, the whiteness of their eyebrows and eyelashes ... "

which he found loathsome and ugly. <sup>90</sup>

A further Turkish influence is suggested by the governor's 'pendant leg' pose; <sup>91</sup> although technically correct, it also emphasises his foppish and dainty appearance. Esin says that the postures of Turkish princes and their retinues appear to be connected with conventional Indian postures of the lower limb {āsana}. <sup>92</sup> These possibly originated in an earlier period, when the world was seen in relation to the cosmos, and they might represent but one aspect of a complicated ritual in the establishment of seniority in rank. A drinking figure with one foot dangling downwards in what Reitlinger describes as "an early Graeco-Buddhist attitude" <sup>93</sup> is found on a 6th/12th century habb or large water jar. <sup>94</sup>

This convention is found too in Turkish iconography since the Buddhist period. <sup>95</sup> viz., a gilded bronze plaque found in the Buddhist temple of Aq-bešim. <sup>96</sup> It is also seen in an Uyghur mural dating from the 3rd/9th to the 6th/12th centuries which depicts a warrior paying homage to a Buddha, <sup>97</sup> and it appears elsewhere in this tale, viz., in the Paris B.N. 6094; <sup>98</sup> in a mirror image of a governor in that manuscript in Maqāma 23. <sup>99</sup> and in Paris B.N. 3929 in Maqāma 38. <sup>100</sup> This posture survived in religious iconography until at least the early 10th/16th century. <sup>101</sup>

However, although it represents an iconographic borrowing, the "at ease" pose may also be a deliberate attempt by the artist to sabotage the governor's authority and a satirical 'taking off' of an unpopular foreign ruler. Al-Kāshgarī, writing in the 5th/11th century, said ...

"I have seen that God caused the sun of empire to rise in the mansions of the Turks, and turned the heavenly spheres around their dominion, and named them Turk, and gave them sovereignty, and made them kings of the age, and placed the reins of the people of this time in their hands, and ordained them over mankind, and sustained them in the right ..." <sup>102</sup>

The visual de-emphasising of the regal aspect now mirrors the declining importance accorded to the ideology of royalty. In this the Maqāmāt perhaps represents a withdrawing of the Arabic-speaking world into its own ethnic fold in response to a growing non-Arab influence in the Muslim world.

There is no elaborate relationship between Abū Zayd, his son and the governor, but the spear links them; it also represents a visual pun on the textual verb jaddala, which mediaeval dictionaries define as "to pierce with a spear or the like; to throw someone down". <sup>103</sup>

The spear has replaced the carved wooden post of the throne, but its tip reflects the post's finial; the replacement is perhaps deliberate on the artist's part, to emphasise the play on words, and it may be intended as a coarse joke {for a male audience} as a reference to phallic symbolism. Rather similar thrones with spear-shaped finials and pointed backdrops appear in the Kitāb al-Tiryāq of 1199 from northern Iraq, <sup>104</sup> as well as on contemporary Persian mīnā'ī pottery. <sup>105</sup>

The governor's throne may also be an adaptation of the type

with wooden posts which can be seen on a bronze candlestick from Sīrt, dating from the second half of the 7th/13th century. <sup>106</sup> Further, its pointed back resembles those found in the portraits of the nine famous physicians in the Galen Kitāb al-Tiryāq from the first half of the 7th/13th century. <sup>107</sup> Al-Wasīṭī may have added the carved post to allow the ghulām or page-boy from the princely iconography to peep through, adding a sense of depth to the composition. This 'peeping' convention is a forerunner to later Persian miniature painting, and it appears too in London, B.L. 1200 Maqāmāt manuscript. <sup>108</sup> It has also been noted in the Paris B.N. 3929 illustration in Maqāma 6, where another small boy was at the side of his master's throne. <sup>109</sup>

The governor is perched on a plump bolster on a very elaborate red carpet or drape, which has a dark green reverse side. This drape is decorated with a ṭirāz band of pseudo-epigraphy within a roundel border; the heart-shaped motif, which contains a leaf, is reminiscent of the Chinese joo-e head which al-Gailanī pointed out in a 7th/13th century Anatolian carpet. <sup>110</sup> The motif, and indeed the whole of the red area of the rug, may be woven in relief; if this is the case, then Yāqūt's term maḥfūra was the correct name for this rug. <sup>111</sup> Maḥfūra in turn had displaced katīfa, meaning a textile with a pile, used as a carpet. <sup>112</sup>

The unusual feature of this throne is the brick dais, which serves two purposes; it establishes a necessary ground line to hold



the composition together, and the contours of highlighted, undressed bricks counteract any tendency to flatness in the composition, in the absence of architectural elements. Al-Wāsiṭī had already produced an almost identical throne for the qāḍī on f.25, in Maqāma 9. It also sat on a brick base, and a small al-Ḥārith replaced the page at the right hand side. The standard royal iconography was evidently capable of adaptation to a variety of plots.

We might have expected a more lavish setting for the official court, for we know that from the 5th/11th to the 6th/13th centuries there was a revival in the prestige and power of centres such as Marw and Damascus.<sup>113</sup> However the absence of architectural distractions serves well to accentuate the anecdotal aspect of the human drama being played out.

The little page boy beside his master would have been well-advised to heed al-Ghazālī's counsel to royal servants, which runs,

"If the service of kings you enter, put very strong garments of discretion on! When you go into {royal courts}, go blind! When you come out, if come you do, come dumb!"<sup>114</sup>

In his case, discretion would obviously be the better part of valour.

Al-Ḥārith recounts in Maqāma 21 how, when he was visiting the Persian city of Rayy he was swept along in a crowd who hurried to hear a preacher whose fame surpassed even that of the great Ibn Sam'ūn. Although the only textual indicator of the setting is nādi,<sup>115</sup> or "meeting place", al-Wāsitī has set this scene in the jāmi' or Friday mosque, where the provincial governor {amīr} is attending public worship.

After an uplifting khuṭba, a member of the congregation tried in vain to have a fair hearing of his plaint by the amīr, and Abū Zayd in the guise of preacher, perhaps mindful of his reputation as an orator, took it upon himself to deliver a public rebuke to the ruler.

The double page spread is very large and is reproduced overleaf.



f. 58v. 4E1



f. 59r. 4E2

The miniatures illustrate the khutba proper, for the preacher is pointing to the congregation in general, while the amīr is sitting comfortably and listening attentively. The amīr has not yet become " ... sullen at what he heard", nor has his colour "changed and changed." <sup>116</sup> He would, of course, have sat in the maqṣūra, the screened-off portion of the mosque which was reserved for his use. Al-Wāsiṭī suggests this exclusive space by placing the governor 'in seclusion' at the top of the composition, just as he has 'secluded' the ladies, and he has achieved this by extending the mosque masonry over the throng outside. {These women are discussed at length in "Women in the Mosque".} He might otherwise have correctly seated the governor downstairs, but this would have been at the expense of the large crowd, whose attentive presence adds so much to the mood of the composition and emphasises the brilliant oratory of the khaṭīb.

Part of al-Ghazālī's advice to a Sultan on proper conduct runs,

"The Sultan should show kindness in dealing with his subjects and not treat them harshly. He should reflect carefully before giving a command. When with his own household, he should not act as though he were better than everyone else, yet at the same time he should forestall undue familiarity. He should show regard for common folk, yet inspire them with respect ... " <sup>117</sup>

Needless to say, his appointed representative would be expected to do likewise and, naturally, advice to the official in this vein is put much more eloquently by Abū Zayd. This 'preacher' delivers the



khutba while seated on the steps of an elaborate minbar; the absence of a handrail emphasises his hand gesture. The stair treads have elaborate triangular insets of shades blue, white, brown and black. {Carpets were strewn on mosque floors for the faithful, and the geometrical forms and colours are reminiscent of Saljūq rugs}. <sup>118</sup> However, the stair treads suggest regularity and rigidity and in reality these triangles may be insets of wood which have been coloured for decorative effect; they also resemble mosaic work. Geometric insets of contrasting woods {and ivory} were featured on the side panels of pulpits, and these have been commented on in the illustrations for the Barqa'id and Samarqand mosques in Maqāmāt 7 and 28 in this manuscript in the section on Ramaḍān.

Blue and white recur on the panel behind the preacher, and tie together and complete the minbar, close the extremity and frame the image. The painter of Paris B.N. 6094 has also depicted an elaborate flat panel behind his preachers in Maqāmāt 21 and 28. <sup>119</sup> Both illustrations were reproduced in the analysis of the minbar in the 'Īd al-Fiṭr jāmi' in Maqāma 7. There, the designs appear to be square tiles in geometrical patterns in blue and white, and may be based on lustreware, such as those on the miḥrāb of the Qayrawān jāmi'. <sup>120</sup> Faience mosaic in a star/"flower" pattern occurred on the miḥrāb of the Ulu jāmi' in Birgeh, dated 712/1312. <sup>121</sup>

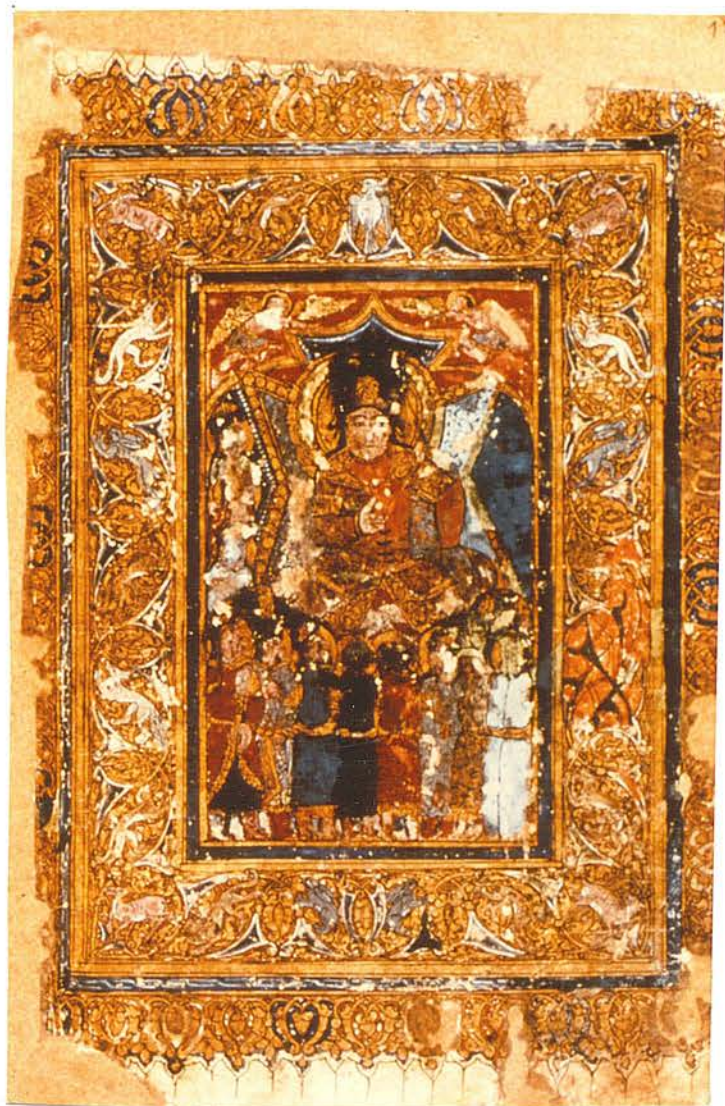
We turn again to the Wāsiṭī painting. The governor is comfortably built; in this manuscript men are usually depicted as



being of slim build. He has a very full face, a thin moustache and his head is framed by a 'halo'. The 'great preacher' is similarly highlighted, and it appears that this linking device indicates that the sermon is now directed at the governor. It is not clear whether the governor has a beard or if he is wearing a balaclava-type of headcovering under his cap. If this is the case, his hair is covered. He wears a bushy black fur hat with gold ornamentation to the front; because of his high status, it is possibly made from sable which was very fine and costly. Al-Tha'ālibī's Laṭā'if al-Ma'ārif lists several kinds of furs, including "the sable of Bulghār", <sup>122</sup> in the context of the 4th/10th century Buwayhid court of 'Adūd al-Dawla. Alternatively, the fur may be marten. Ibn Jubayr recorded how, on a visit to Baghdad on the sixth day of Safar {the second Islamic month},

"We saw this caliph, Abū'l-'Abbās Aḥmad al-Nāṣir lī dīn Allāh ... in the western part of his belvedere there ... on his head was a gilded cap encircled with black fur of the costly and precious kind used for {royal} clothes, such as that of the marten, or even better." <sup>123</sup>

This hat is both flatter and wider than the examples which occur in other manuscripts <sup>124</sup> and on metalwork. <sup>125</sup> These variations may reflect variations in fashion, the availability of the pelts, or stylistic traditions according to the places of execution of the manuscripts. Al-Wāsiṭī shows yet another variation of fur hat on f.lv of the double frontispiece.



The amīr in the Rayy congregational mosque wears a dark blue robe of ankle length with ṭirāz and tight sleeves; it does not cross over his chest. He is probably a Saljūq Turk. Nassar has

pointed out the similarities in facial features and costume between portrayals of kings and governors in the Maqāmāt and those in the Paris B.N. arabe 3465 Kalīla wa Dimna.<sup>126</sup> He is in a frontal pose, but an element of informality in his depiction now appears, for his head is slightly inclined towards the left as he regards the famous 'preacher'. He sits on a long bolster with pointed ends, and one ankle rests daintily on the other in the cross-legged position which we have seen elsewhere in the Maqāmāt miniatures.<sup>127</sup> It goes without saying that the amīr should have removed his shoes; however, as his retainers wear boots, it is possible that his footwear is on view. This may be a satirical touch, to suggest ignorance on the ruler's part. Alternatively, if the throne scene has been directly appropriated from elsewhere, it may be an oversight by al-Wāsiṭī.

The throne has the usual pointed corners; these seem to be carved from wood and they feature a floriate pattern. A similar throne with bolster appears in the early 7th/13th century Istanbul, Hazine 841, Vargā va Gulshah manuscript.<sup>128</sup> A handsome red and black carpet or fabric with a leaf design covers its back. Behind the throne one can glimpse a circular drape or rug, and al-Wāsiṭī later shows a scalloped circular drape behind the throne of the wālī in Maqāma 39.<sup>129</sup> These may be an adaptation of the rather similar scalloped rug on which the prince sits in the frontispiece of the contemporary Vienna Kitāb al-Tiryāq.<sup>130</sup> The circular edge is also obvious on a rug in a royal audience scene in the Istanbul Vargā va Gulshah;<sup>131</sup> it is reminiscent of the Sāsānian roundel motif.

Five beardless, long-haired youths {ghilmān} attend the amīr in an amusing and disrespectful rag-tag manner. It is difficult to say how old these pages are. Although they are wearing Arab clothing, their long hair and full round faces suggest they are of non-Semitic origin; they also conform to an idealised notion of male adolescent beauty. They too wear fur hats with gold ornamentation which are of the flatter type found in a Kitāb al-Tiryāq miniature.<sup>132</sup> Four of them carry swords, and they must be bodyguards, for there would always be the possibility of an attempt on a ruler's life.

Al-Hādī is credited with the institution of the caliphal bodyguard {ḥaras},<sup>133</sup> which in the late 2nd/8th century was drawn from Khurāsān or from among loyal Medinans. In 3rd/9th and 4th/10th century Baghdād the regiment of bodyguards, {al-mukhtarīn} performed military service at audiences and acted as escorts of the caliph.<sup>134</sup> It is possible that caliphal appointees, although lesser dignitaries, also merited a guard. In the early 7th/13th century al-Rāwandī wrote in his Raḥat al-Sudūr

"In the lands of the Arabs, the Persians, the Romans, and the Russians, the sword is in the hands of the Turks and the fear of their swords is rooted in men's hearts."<sup>135</sup>

Ibn Baṭṭūta's 8th/14th-century account of his visit to the Emperor Takfūr emphasises the security aspect of a court visit.<sup>136</sup> A slave led him through four gateways, each guarded by armed foot soldiers, and

"When we reached the fifth gateway, Sunbūl {the slave} left me, and going inside returned with four Greek youths, who searched me, to see that I had no knife on my person. The officer said to me, 'This is a custom of theirs; every person who enters the king's presence, be he noble or private citizen,

foreigner or native, must be searched'." 137

The swordsman in the black clothing is perhaps the most senior, for al-Ṣabī said,

"'Abbāsīd dignitaries wear black outer garments and shoes; and they adorn themselves according to rank with girdles and swords." 138

Black was proscribed for lower ranking dignitaries, who could choose other colours. 139

The question of rank appears to be confirmed by this official standing nearest to the amīr. Close proximity to royalty and its bearing on seniority also applies to the unarmed page, whose function is not very clear. His distinctive belt or girdle suggests that he holds a special rank; Nizām al-Mulk reported that by the third year of training a page was presented with a girdle. 140

The page has a red cloth {mandīl} with a gold band {muṭarraz} knotted or tucked into his belt. The mandīl was a rectangular piece of cloth which served a variety of functions, such as a napkin or towel, and it was detached from the body when serving its basic function; 141 when it was attached to the person, its function became secondary, as here. 142 It had connotations of refinement. In time, the mandīl became indispensable for a properly attired person, 143 and it was a desirable and costly possession. 144 This seems to be a fairly early depiction of the mandīl attached to the belt as an item of apparel. 145 There was a gradual progression in the training of a page {ghulām}, with increase in rank visible through the clothing and accoutrements and the further entrusting with duties. By the third year he had a girdle, and in the fourth year a quiver and bow. 146 In theory, an ambitious youth could



become a troop-leader and progress to chamberlain {ḥājib}, and by early middle age a really capable man might reasonably expect to be promoted to the rank of a provincial amīr.<sup>147</sup> In the case of Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu', he was virtual ruler of Mosul in 607/1210<sup>148</sup> and in 631/1233 he became sovereign in his own right.<sup>149</sup>

Whelan has provided penetrating insight into the institution of khaṣṣākiya or category of personal attendants in the context of the Bahri Mamluks.<sup>150</sup> This was perhaps more highly developed than that of the earlier dāriya ghilmān and more orientated towards the military.<sup>151</sup> There too the personal emblems adopted for individual posts were symbols of achievement, and they appear in manuscript illustration,<sup>152</sup> on metalwork<sup>153</sup> and on stone reliefs.<sup>154</sup> In both categories a small elite was raised at court in close contact with the ruler; mutual affection and trust sustained self-interest<sup>155</sup> and in many cases a sexual bond appears implicit.<sup>156</sup>

Four of the ghilmān in the Rayy mosque wear long boots, while the fifth wears shoes. This, of course, is unthinkable in a mosque, so they are, technically, incorrectly dressed. Their costume, rank and physical orientation in relation to the ruler may also presuppose a knowledge of court procedure on the part of al-Wasītī.

The tightly packed congregation in the public part of the jāmi' interior and the overflow outside is all male; most faces are hirsute and Semitic, although here and there one finds features from the farther corners of the empire. All are well dressed, urban types, although there is one Bedouin at the top right hand side of

the crowd who is distinguishable by his turban, which is fastened under the chin. Three horsemen reinforce the notion of a crowd hastening to hear a famous preacher who had run "with the running of steeds" and invaded the mosque precincts "with the spread of locusts". 157

Abū Zayd was not heeding al-Ghazālī's definition of "proper conduct" to one's ruler, for al-Ghazālī said,

"Subjects should stand in awe of their ruler, even when he is kindly and must refrain from undue familiarity, even though he be lenient. When the Sultan appears, all conversation should cease and those present should call out blessings upon him." 158

Of course there is a possible explanation for Abū Zayd's outburst, and this illustration may represent a satirical, or at least humorous, portrait of a foreign ruler by author and painter. It was well known that many of these officials, being non-Arabs, neither spoke nor understood very much Arabic, and al-Wasitī's governor of Raḥba in Maqāma 10 has already been shown in a most unflattering light. 159

The governor of Rayy seems more enlightened. He was impressed by Abū Zayd's exhortation to repentance and mercy; he saw the error of his ways and

"was courteous to the preacher, and gave him gifts, and urged him to visit him." 160

This is a highly successful montage which has captured a spellbound audience, a "distinguished preacher", and the ruler and his retinue in the maqsūra. One can sense the dusty clamour outside

the mosque, and a late 4th/10th-century anecdote from al-Muḡaddasī sums up well this atmosphere. The caliph ‘Abd al-Malik reportedly said,

"It would be splendid to rule without the clatter of the post-horses and the hard wood of the pulpit".<sup>161</sup>

Maqāma 23 is one of the longest tales, and al-Hārith finds himself in an unidentified government office, where an old man accuses a youth of plagiarism of his poetry before the wālī or governor.

The Paris B.N. 6094 manuscript has a single miniature which is framed by one line of text above, and one below. It is a literal interpretation to set the scene, and it reads,

"{And behold ... an old man long of tongue but short of cloak who} held by the collar a lad fresh in youth but worn in tunic. So I spurred on the track of the spectators until we arrived at the gate of the Prefecture. And there was the Master of Protection sitting squarely on his cushion, awing by his deportment. Then said the old man to him, 'God magnify the Governor, and set his foot {on high}'." <sup>162</sup>

The illustration is reproduced overleaf.



Abū Zayd is grasping the youth by the shoulder and his upraised arm and forward-leaning posture suggest vigorous movement. His violet robe has tirāz bands on the upper sleeve, and above this garment he has lightly thrown a shorter brown robe over his right

shoulder. According to the text, this is the ṭaylasān; <sup>163</sup> one should bear in mind that the author wrote in the 6th/12th century, yet the ṭaylasān by the 7th/13th century, on the visual evidence of the Maḡāmāt manuscripts at least, apparently came to be associated only with judges, and it was shown in white or black and draped over the turban and shoulders. <sup>164</sup> Elsewhere in this manuscript judges wear a white ṭaylasān, <sup>165</sup> and judges in the contemporary Paris B.N. arabe 3465 Kalīla wa Dimna also wear a ṭaylasān. <sup>166</sup>

A shamsa or variation of a sun motif is printed on Abū Zayd's overgarment. It occurs at the hip and accentuates its line, and it will become clear later that a feature of this artist's depiction of costume is that he treats it as a flat surface capable of decoration, and that garments are 'figure-forming'. <sup>167</sup> Abū Zayd's adolescent son wears a short green shift with gold braid and a gold-coloured or yellow turban. Both the youth and Abū Zayd are barefoot, and one of Abū Zayd's feet extends over the base line.

The wālī grants his audience in a reception chamber and he is seated beneath a central, dark blue mugarnas dome; a smaller dome lies to each side of it. The spandrels of the archway are decorated in violet and black, with a floriate scroll pattern which may represent stuccowork. Nassar has drawn attention to similar schematic architecture and decorative motifs in two contemporary Syriac Gospels, British Museum add. 7170 and the Vatican Siriaco 559 manuscripts; <sup>168</sup> it also appears on a canteen in the Freer Gallery of Art, no. 41.10. <sup>169</sup> From an architectural viewpoint, the construction is rudimentary and it merely serves as a frame for



the wālī; it suggests the perspective of a central chamber. A tripartite framework is more common in this manuscript. The building itself, according to the text, is situated in an open space around a city or a castle.<sup>170</sup> Very similar 'architecture' is also found at this period in the Paris B.N. arabe 3465 Kalīla wa Dimna.<sup>171</sup>

Despite the caption's clear description of him "sitting squarely" {mutarabbi'ān},<sup>172</sup> namely with his legs crossed beneath him, the governor's right leg is in the curious pendant position which we have already seen in al-Wāsiṭī's portrait of the governor of Raḥba, in Maqāma 10.<sup>173</sup> Chenery translated the last line of the above caption as "God magnify the governor and set his foot on high".<sup>174</sup> He elaborates on this by stating that the wālī sets his ankle on high "so that the lowest part of him may be higher than the highest part of his companions",<sup>175</sup> although this would be difficult to illustrate literally within the confines of a folio. The invocation became a synonym for prestige and might.<sup>176</sup> Chenery's explanation confirms the previous discussion of the pendant leg pose in Maqāma 10 in the context of Turkish sedentary postures, which served to establish a hierarchy according to social class.

Although this pose may arguably represent a visual pun on the text, I suggest that the artist paid little attention to the text and merely used an existing model as a type for his governors. This seems highly likely, because he has painted the governor in Maqāma 38 in exactly this pose,<sup>177</sup> and he has also rendered a

precise mirror image of this wālī for the governor of Raḥba, who is below shown for comparison.

Paris, B.N. 6094, f.31:2D4, Mq. 10.



We return now to the B.N. 6094 miniature for Maqāma 23. Apart from the youthful attendants, one further point of confirmation of the adaptation from royal iconography is the inclusion of the bowl of fruit in the foreground. One might compare the Saljūq ruler 'at

ease' on the frontispiece of the contemporary Vienna Kitāb al-Tiryāq already referred to, <sup>178</sup> and Barzuya's audience with King Nushirwān in the Paris B.N. arabe 3465 Kalīla wa Dimna. <sup>179</sup>

Our wālī sits on a long flat, dark blue cushion with golden pointed ends. His ebony throne has short carved ogee feet and pointed corners. In the 6th/12th century, the geographer al-Idrīsī mentioned ebony growing in "unbroken forests" on the banks of the Nile in deepest Africa, <sup>180</sup> and it is possible that African ebony was exported to Arab lands. However, ebony was certainly imported from India. <sup>181</sup> A fine black heavily brocaded cloth covers the back of the throne, and it is worked in a pattern of palm leaves and other vegetal motifs. Al-Muqtadir had earlier favoured an ebony throne, which was covered in a fine Dābiqī cloth with gold embroidery. <sup>182</sup>

Kings in the Paris Kalīla wa Dimna manuscript also pose on similar thrones. <sup>183</sup> Three striking similarities are noted in the Kalīla wa Dimna miniature of the king and Ilādh, namely the single archway with a large central dome and two smaller domes, the fact that this construction serves as a frame for the king and that it also occupies the left hand side of the composition; <sup>184</sup> however, his throne has no solid back. Both artists perhaps drew on the same iconography.

The wālī has long dark hair, a full beard and a moustache, and he wears the tall dark fur cap characteristic of Turkish costume. <sup>185</sup> The fur seems to be sketchily drawn with circles; this allows a glimpse of a type of helmet which has not occurred elsewhere here, <sup>186</sup> in the early Mamlūk Maqāmāt B.L. or. add.

22.114,<sup>187</sup> in the frontispiece to volume 17 of the contemporary Vienna, A.F.10 Kitāb al-Tiryāq,<sup>188</sup> in the Paris B.N. arabe 2964 Kitāb al-Tiryāq,<sup>189</sup> or the Istanbul F.E. 1566 Kitāb al-Aghānī.<sup>190</sup>

These black hats also appear to be made from fur pelts. The best sable was "the Chinese, then the Caspian".<sup>191</sup> Similar hats have also been found on Saljūq metalwork, for example, on the 'Blacas ewer' in the British Museum,<sup>192</sup> and elsewhere, such as a ewer in the Walters Art Gallery,<sup>193</sup> on a cup in the Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi,<sup>194</sup> as well as on an undated candlestick in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.<sup>195</sup> These two latter items were manufactured in the first half of the 7th/13th century.<sup>196</sup>

The wālī wears a red, knee-length slit tunic; gold braid runs around the neckline, down the front and around the hem and it has ṭirāz bands on the upper arm. It is possible that the fabric came from Sūs, for al-Ṣābī mentioned that "red Sūsī cloth, gilded or plain embroidery" were included in the robes of investiture of governors.<sup>197</sup> However, a very fine, luminous crimson material was also manufactured in Armenia, and "the more gold is woven into {these varieties}, the better the quality and the higher the price."<sup>198</sup>

Despite the fact that identical hats are found on Saljūq metalwork, the coat shown here differs, for it is not crossed over and fastened like that, for example, on the Blacas ewer.<sup>199</sup> Around his waist is a golden belt of roundel design. Al-Ṣābī records that the investiture ensemble of garments and accessories also included a belt.<sup>200</sup>

Our wālī wears flat black shoes, and his violet stockings

{muzāj} are striped in lighter and darker hues of violet. Similar stockings are depicted later in Maqāma 31, <sup>201</sup> where two non-Arab footmen in al-Wāsiṭī's ḥajj procession wear striped muzāj.

Two young pages stand behind the throne. They belong to the category of personal or private attendants {khaṣṣa} within the household servant class {dāriya ghilmān}.<sup>202</sup>

The youth nearest Abū Zayd is very girlish-looking. This notion is emphasised by what resembles a female headcovering tied under the chin: his mustard coloured robe with a deep grey quilted-looking edging is split down the middle. Perhaps this is a female attendant, for al-Jāḥiẓ told how

"A caliph, or someone else in a comparable position of power and influence, used never to be without a slave-girl standing behind him to wave fly-whisk and fan, and another to hand him things, in a public audience in the presence of other men." <sup>203</sup>

Further, al-Jāḥiẓ recounted,

"An indication that looking at women in general is not prohibited is that a middle-aged spinster will appear before men without any bashfulness. Were this prohibited when she is young, it would not be permissible when she is middle-aged ... " <sup>204</sup>

The possibility therefore is that these were female servants.

The second page wears a turban and a long-sleeved similarly-coloured gamīs or shift; the face is incompletely drawn. One hand is curled around the throne and this device, together with Abū Zayd's projecting bare foot, gives the composition a small measure of depth. Al-Ṣābi said that

"Slavic servants stand behind the throne and on its sides chasing flies with gold and silver-capped fly-whisks." <sup>205</sup>

A fly-whisk fitting this description is found in the portrait of Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu' on the Istanbul F.E. 1566 Kitāb al-Aghānī



frontispiece. <sup>206</sup> Al-Tha'ālibī reported that shaggy fur or tails of the yak were used for fly-whisks; <sup>207</sup> they were mounted on poles and were also used on spear shafts. <sup>208</sup> They came from the "Turkish lands", with which al-Tha'ālibī equated India, in connection with the "profusion of their specialities". <sup>209</sup>

It is interesting to note that, in the royal context, the type of fly-whisk in the Paris B.N. 6094 invariably appears in the 7th/13th and 8th/14th century Maqāmāt, when the governors wear the same type of fur hat and Saljūq costume. <sup>210</sup> Elsewhere, the rare flabellum type of fly-whisk appears once, <sup>211</sup> and a short-handled "flag", presumably made from paper or matting, is found where there are apparently elements of Asian costume. <sup>212</sup> The above points all seem to bear out Nassar's contention that "it is noticeable that the 'Saljūq' style occurs most often in association with enthronement scenes." <sup>213</sup>

The fly whisk in the illustration under discussion is angled in counterpoint to Abū Zayd's hand gesture and, together with the curved arch, it serves to negate the strict angularity of the reception chamber and the throne. It also adds force to the dialogue.

One gathers from the text that the wālī was most definitely not amused at being duped, so there is an element of humour in that a man so apparently conscious of his superior rank was taken in by Abū Zayd. However, in view of the fact that the artist has drawn heavily from other traditions, I consider that the humour is only understood by the reader, for this manuscript lacks the 'personal' touch which comes over so well in the Paris B.N. 3929 and B.N. 5847

manuscripts.

The illustration of a wālī on f.7v of Paris B.N. arabe 3929 for the 6th tale is reproduced in the list of illustrations of the manuscripts; it shows the Saljūq official filling Abū Zayd's mouth with pearls as a reward for his eloquence. As in the Paris B.N. 6094 miniature just discussed, it will be noted that the surface of textiles is treated as an area of the composition which is amenable to decoration. The headgear of the wālī in Paris B.N. 3929 is quite different to that of Saljūq officials in the other Maqāmāt manuscripts.

These representative illustrations of governors in both the Arab and Saljūq manners show great diversity in iconography, costume, architecture and landscape, yet they manage to give what appears to be an accurate impression of local custom and practice in the context of the audience at court.

With regard to the Wāsiṭī double frontispiece, the identity of the two characters portrayed in the manner of governors has not, as yet, been established. The iconography was perhaps adapted from the 'author portrait' cycle, as a compliment to a potential patron. A further possibility is that there is an implicit notion of presentation and approval, by an author {and a painter}. There is a parallel here with Abū Zayd's conduct throughout the Maqāmāt, where he speaks eloquently and his address meets with the approval of the assembly. More particularly, in the case of his encounters with some of these governors, Abū Zayd the Arab speaks, while the Saljūq official listens.

## ii. The Judiciary

Seven of the tales <sup>214</sup> are concerned with Abū Zayd's appearance before a qāḍī, when he invariably takes the part of a vexatious litigant in the guise of the outraged innocent party. His object is his 'vindication' and compensation and he is generally successful in deluding the judge with his eloquent pleading. On one occasion his indiscreet celebration within earshot of a servant of the court resulted in him being called back before the judge, who sportingly laughed so much that his hat fell off. <sup>215</sup> These amusing tales exemplify the tilting at authority by the common man but, more seriously, they also offer an insight into legal rights, the nature and punishment of offences and the like.

Maqāma 37 unfolds as the astute al-Ḥārith pays a visit to the local qāḍī, whom he has assiduously courted during his business trips to Ṣa'da, in Yemen; this presumably would stand him in good stead in the event of any dispute with another merchant. The artist of Leningrad S.23 has produced a very comprehensive court scene on page 250, and the text immediately above the miniature reads:

"I used constantly to assist at the courts of litigation  
And to decide between the aggressors and the aggrieved.  
Now the judge was sitting to administer justice  
On a day of general concourse and gathering of people,  
When lo! there came in an old man in threadbare garb,"

It continues below:

"With limbs apparently tremulous {from age},  
Who regarded the crowd with a discriminating look,  
And then stated that he had a most untractable opponent;  
And in less time than a spark shines, or one points with a  
finger,  
A youth was brought in, who seemed {bold} as a lion;

And the old man then said, 'May God help thee, O judge,  
And save thee from the guilt of conniving {at wrong}!' 216

Leningrad, Academy of Science, S.23, p.250:7E6, Mq. 37.



At centre stage the judge and Abū Zayd are obviously engaged in serious dialogue. Abū Zayd makes his point concerning the

recalcitrance of his son with a stab of the hand, while the judge sits rather impassively. His outstretched palm suggests that he is sympathetically conceding a point to the plaintiff, and indeed the text reveals him as one who "regarded his complaint as a serious matter" and gave it as his opinion that

"disobedience in children is as painful as bereavement of them, and perhaps it would be preferable to be entirely childless." 217

Our hero confidently stands to plead his case and is not at all intimidated by the sombre qādī; indeed, he has already been extremely impertinent in the caption in impugning his integrity. His clothing is dark, but not "threadbare".

The episode unfolds within a tripartite architectural framework and this building is spacious and fairly ornate. A draped curtain to the left suggests an anteroom where Abū Zayd's son had been waiting before his summons by the court usher {ḥājib} to enter court. The two small ribbed domes with clerestory windows are grey, and so probably lead-covered. These are set over the smaller side-chambers, and a wrought metal balustrade surmounts the central, undomed area. This crenellation, which resembles pierced metalwork, serves to highlight the main action, which is further emphasised by a heavily scroll-patterned curtain which forms an 'archway'. The curtain can apparently be pulled down by the brass ring at the centre to close off the area when the court is not sitting.

Stucco panels are inset above the carved wooden architraves of the anterooms, and they may be perforated to provide airflow. A yellow brick floor, set in a vertical bond, provides a clear base line. As this architectural format is employed elsewhere in the



manuscript, <sup>218</sup> it may indicate an element of basic planning of the setting, which can be adapted to a variety of functions, as required by the text.

There is nothing in this scene, such as 'Abbāsid or religious flags, to suggest that it takes place in a state institution, and one assumes that power is vested in the individual, namely the qāḍī. The task is to identify those elements which will confirm that it is a court of law, in whatever type of building.

The judge sits on a carved wooden bench with turned wood decoration, and he has a large bolster at his back. Various renderings of this type of bench can be seen in the school room in Maqāma 46 in this manuscript, as well as in Paris B.N. arabe 5847 and Istanbul E.E. 2916, <sup>219</sup> and it seems therefore to be a standard type. Judges with large pointed bolsters at their back also occur elsewhere here, <sup>220</sup> in Paris B.N. arabe 5847 <sup>221</sup> and Istanbul E.E. 2916. <sup>222</sup> Very similar figures and cushions appear in the Dioscorides De Materia Medica of 1224 in the Freer Gallery, Washington <sup>223</sup> and the cushion seems to have a Byzantine prototype. <sup>224</sup> Curiously, considering its Byzantine influences, large pointed bolsters standing on end do not seem to occur in Paris B.N. arabe 6094.

The judge wears a white robe and trousers and over his turban a black shawl {taylasān} falls down his shoulders. In this Maqāma the Paris B.N. arabe 5847 and Paris B.N. arabe 3929 artists also portray a black shawl, although it is more usually shown as white. <sup>225</sup> Abū Yūsuf, the distinguished jurist in al-Rashīd's era who was the first to be designated Chief Judge, ordered the

theologians to wear a black turban with the taylasān. <sup>226</sup> That conferred on them a distinctive headdress and black, of course, signified allegiance to the 'Abbāsīd dynasty. <sup>227</sup>

We read of one, Abū 'Abd-Allāh, who

"went to one of the towns of the Banī Aghlab where he put on a hood and lived as an honourable person" {'adl}, <sup>228</sup>

which is an Islamic legal term for a person of good reputation whose testimony is assumed to be true. <sup>229</sup> The wearing of a shawl does not, therefore, seem to have been the sole prerogative of one particular professional group; rather it indicates a person of good education and some social standing engaged professionally in the practice or study of the law or ritual of Islām. This is borne out by the fact that the preacher {khaṭīb} in Maqāma 28 in Paris B.N. arabe 6094 <sup>230</sup> also wears a black taylasān.

Further confirmation is found in the fact that in Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's time, around the end of the 6th/12th century, the khaṭīb in the Cairo mosque was described as being dressed "'alā rasmi'l-'abbāsiyya" viz., "after the fashion of the 'Abbāsīds", and he wore a black robe with black linen hood, a black turban and carried a sword. <sup>231</sup> Our qāḍī, therefore, represents a member of the social class called arbāb al-ṭayālīṣa or "hood-wearers". <sup>232</sup> Taylasān is also cognate with the Hebrew tallith, which Jastrow describes as "the cloak of honour, the scholar's or officer's distinction", <sup>233</sup> and so the hood or cloak was a sign of distinction in eastern societies.

The taylasān does not originally appear to have been an Arab headdress, for both the Tāj al-'Arūs and the Muḥkam describe it as

"a certain article of apparel worn by the 'ajam or Persians"; <sup>234</sup> while elsewhere its description appears to vary according to periods, fashion and countries. <sup>235</sup> However, al-Ṭabarī noted that a humble clerk in the Baghdād Palace wore a ṭaylasān, <sup>236</sup> and there is a well-known tale concerning Iṣḥāq al-Mawṣilī, a singer at al-Ma'mūn's court, who wore one. <sup>237</sup> It seems that at a comparatively late period it came to be associated with distinction, while at an earlier time it was a more popular form of headdress.

An early 6th/12th-century record of a probate sale from the Cairo Geniza quotes the price of a ṭaylasān as one dīnār, <sup>238</sup> and a merchant's bills for the period 1230-1235 reveal that ṭayālisa then cost seven dīnārs each in Egypt. <sup>239</sup> According to al-Jāḥiẓ, the best ṭayālisa are "the Ṭabarī Ruyānī kind, then those of Amūl, then the Egyptian kind {miṣrī}, then the Qūmis kind". <sup>240</sup> Those made of mulḥam or half silk from Nishāpūr were also held in high regard. <sup>241</sup>

Beneath his ṭaylasān, the judge wears a white turban {'imāma}. A turban could contain a great length of material, and its donning might be construed as a badge of the Muslim, for a Prophetic tradition runs,

"The difference between a Muslim and an infidel is the wearing of a turban on the cap." <sup>242</sup>

Ibn al-Jawzī and Abu'l-Faraj al-Isfahānī stress that the 'imāma was the main distinctive dress of a male. <sup>243</sup> Al-Jāḥiẓ described it as

"a shield on the battlefield, a net in the summer; a dithār or outer garment in the winter, and an honour in the assembly, a protector in vicissitudes, and an increase in the stature of a man." <sup>244</sup>

It was obligatory to wear the turban outdoors, except on

occasions of condolence or whilst on the ḥajj,<sup>245</sup> while government servants had to wear {black} turbans in their offices at all times.<sup>246</sup> According to al-Ṣābī, this was official etiquette, and any breach could lead to humiliation or even to corporal punishment.<sup>247</sup> An account in the Siyāsāt-nāma reveals the ultimate humiliation meted out by ‘Adūd al-Dawla who

"ordered the great chamberlain to go and bring the judge of the city bareheaded before him, with his turban round his neck."<sup>248</sup>

This confirms that the turban was also recognised as a badge of rank.

There is no sign in this miniature of the tall headdress known as qalansuwa, which in al-Kindī's day, the 3rd/9th century, was regarded by judges and legists as their perquisite and badge of office, for by the 7th/13th century the qādī was known as the ṣāhib al-‘imāma, or rabb al-‘imāma,<sup>249</sup> viz., "the turban-wearer", or as the ṣāhib dastar in Persia.<sup>250</sup> Another account tells how Abū Yūsuf the Ḥanafī jurist was something of a dandy. He was on extremely familiar terms with Harūn al-Rashīd and one day, when the Caliph saw him, he was moved to quote the poet Ibn Mayyada,

"With a travelling cloak wound round him, he was brought by a mare with scant hair on her forehead, tossing a unique personality."<sup>251</sup>

In this matter of ostentation, the same Abū Yūsuf left on his death in about 182/798 200 pairs of silk trousers {sarāwil}, each with Armenian braiding valued at one dīnār.<sup>252</sup>

Al-Tanūkhī tells of a certain judge in Baṣra who was said every evening

"to leave his residence in Ahnaf Square wearing breeches, with a light cloak on his back, and sandals of Gīt on his

feet, and with a fan in his hand". 253

Considering that the law is grounded in the Qur'ān, these examples do seem to illustrate something of a preoccupation by jurists with appearance and worldly matters.

The judge's white robe and trousers in the above illustration also appear to be of a fine, diaphanous material. One cannot see if this qādī wears shoes or sandals, but it is likely that he wore suqmān, 254 which were a type of shoe. All the characters, who appear to be Arabs, wear turbans {one of which has a long tail}, and the standard type of robe with tirāz and wide sleeves. Yāqūt describes sleeves during the 'Abbāsīd era as wide enough to double as pockets; 255 indeed it seems that too narrow a sleeve, like too short a coat, was interpreted as reprehensible poverty or meanness on the part of the wearer. 256 According to al-Maqrīzī, a certain chief qādī in Egypt reportedly carried a discourse in his sleeve which he had written out on flat sheets of paper to be delivered at a festival. 257 This illustration may then give a true representation of contemporary costume, and the clerk's report could fit unfolded into his sleeve.

Abū Zayd has resorted to his first recourse in a civil dispute in taking his complaint to the judge. He appears to be following custom in presenting his own plaint orally here, 258 for in the court of the qādī only the plaintiff adduced evidence and questioned witnesses. 259 This was the theory; in practice local custom and law seems to have prevailed. 260 Our qādī delivers his judgment in the presence of the witnesses, as laid down; 261 should this case have proved very difficult, he would have done so in the presence



of learned lawyers with whom he could consult. <sup>262</sup>

The qādī was supposed to sit in an open, spacious place and thus be accessible to all. <sup>263</sup> This has been illustrated here. The Kitāb al-Aghānī reveals the chief mosque as a public place and open to all the community, and the qādī originally sat there, leaning against a pillar. <sup>264</sup> This perhaps arose because court work appears to have been conducted with maximum publicity. An official witness, who acted as deputy to al-Tanūkhī's father, reported a feud between the Censor, al-Kawkabī, and the judge Abū'l-Hasan Ibn 'Alī al-Sarrāj. <sup>265</sup> Al-Kawkabī unexpectedly confronted the qādī,

"who had taken to sitting in the mosque only twice a week. Taking up his station at the gate with his force, he bade them tell the qādī that he was not entitled to continue sitting in his house. 'Come forth' they were to say to him, 'to the mosque, where you will be within reach of the strong and the weak, as you are instructed in your deed of investiture.'" <sup>266</sup>

But in early days judges could hear cases at home, and the parties at that time conducted their business while standing before the qādī; <sup>267</sup> later, the practice of sitting in a row before the judge was introduced, <sup>268</sup> and this is the case concerning secondary characters in the illustration. During the mid 3rd/9th century orthodox reaction sought to prohibit the use of the mosque as a courtroom, on the grounds of desecration, but the prohibition was ineffectual. <sup>269</sup> There is nothing in this miniature to suggest that the scene is enacted in a mosque, although if it were a private house it is an elaborate one.

It is likely that a ticket {riqqa} <sup>270</sup> bearing the names both of the plaintiff and defendant {and those of their respective fathers} has been used to call out Abū Zayd's case. Tickets were

collected by the clerk of the court {kātib} before the court convened, <sup>271</sup> and al-Ḥaṣṣaf, in the 3rd/9th century, reported that a judge could, on average, dispose of some fifty cases each day. <sup>272</sup> Like their predecessors, judges in the Saljūq period charged fees for the drafting of legal documents. <sup>273</sup> Text books appear to make no mention of fees, beyond stipulating that they were paid, but Levy thinks that it is "fairly certain" that some form of emolument would be paid by the successful party. <sup>274</sup>

Despite receiving salaries, being accorded a special form of dress, and acquiring land fiefs, <sup>275</sup> judges did not necessarily command the respect of the jurists, and their appointment may have posed a moral dilemma for some; religious scruples seem to have prevented certain candidates from sitting in judgment over their fellow men. In the 4th/10th century al-Samargandī wrote,

"On the question of the acceptance of a judicial post there is no unanimity of opinion. Some maintain that it should not be accepted; while others that it may be, provided it has not been sought or striven for." <sup>276</sup>

Al-Tanūkhī throws light on the appointment of judges when he describes how ‘Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Dasah related the following tale, on the authority of Abū'l-Husayn:

"When I was grown up the qādī Abū Ḥazim wrote to my father, saying: 'I am informed that you have a grown-up son who is a student, etc., {his expressions were very complimentary}, so send him to me to be invested with the qādī-ship.' My father said to me: 'What say you to this?' I said: 'Please send me, as you see how straitened our circumstances are, and possibly I may get a salary which will keep me in comfort.'" <sup>277</sup>

The father said he should not go, "for offices come to an end, whereas integrity endures." <sup>278</sup> Mez cites one savant who even feigned mental incompetence to avoid his appointment. <sup>279</sup>

For reasons of conscience, some judges also refused either to draw a salary or to accept money from the parties with whom they had dealings. <sup>280</sup> Al-Ṭanūkhī himself, who presided over several Mesopotamian districts as qāḍī and was also superintendent of the Baghdad mint, received "only sixty dīnārs a month as pay" <sup>281</sup> for the combined posts, according to Yāqūt, whereas Nasīr-i Khusraw, the Persian traveller, tells us that the chief qāḍī in Egypt in the same century drew a monthly salary of two thousand dīnārs; apparently he also managed to supplement this. <sup>282</sup> These examples appear to bear out Mez's statement that "convention demanded but a hesitating acceptance of the qāḍī's post" <sup>283</sup>

Perhaps because of reluctance on the part of certain people to take up the post, other less scrupulous people were inadvertently recruited. For instance, an account of an exemplary judge by al-Ṭanūkhī hints at possible judicial corruption elsewhere. He tells us that after Abū Umayya al-Akhwaṣ, who was of "obscure origin" was appointed a judge in Baṣra, he

"proceeded to his province and was anxious to conceal his personal deficiencies and want of knowledge, and further to display some good quality; so he maintained strict integrity in matters of display, took no bribes, was strictly honourable, and confined his takings to his official income and the gifts bestowed on him by Ibn al-Furāt." <sup>284</sup>

Nor did the appointment guarantee personal immunity to the incumbent, for al-Tha'ālibī's Latā'if al-Ma'ārif records that the first qāḍī to be executed in Islam was Abū'l-Muthanna, who was killed in the early 4th/10th century by the restored Caliph al-Muqtadir for having paid homage to Ibn al-Mu'tazz. <sup>285</sup> By that period, judges were usually accountable to the Chief Qāḍī in

Baghdad, <sup>286</sup> and one presumes that cases outwith the jurisdiction of Abū Zayd's judge would have been referred to the higher court in Baghdad. According to Ibn Baṭṭūta each of the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence usually had its own supreme qādī. <sup>287</sup>

The figure at the right hand side, who is on a level with the judge, must be al-Ḥārith, in his role of occasional assistant at court and a figure of some authority, as the text makes clear. Perhaps this fact is being emphasised by his sitting at the same height as the judge. Presumably the man at the left is Abū Zayd's son, who is shown as a fully mature hirsute male. He has his arm and one leg draped around the framework, and this may be a compositional device to suggest an element of depth. Although it could be interpreted as a sign of insouciance on the part of a youth "bold as a lion", the former interpretation is the more likely, for we have already considered this convention in Maqāma 38, in the court of the governor of Marw. <sup>288</sup>

In the centre foreground a kātib or court clerk is busily recording the proceedings with a pen. Arab historians generally recognise the family of the 3rd/9th century wazīr Yaḥyā ibn Khālīd as the founders of the class known as ahl al-qalam, viz., 'People of the Pen'. <sup>289</sup> The art of the pen is widely esteemed in Muslim society. Mention of "al-qalam" occurs on two occasions in the Qur'ān; <sup>290</sup> it recalls the earliest Qur'ānic revelation and serves also to stress the prophethood of Muḥammad. Prescribed qualities for secretaries {kuttāb} included the avoidance of any tendency to prolixity and repetition, and concise writing, which elicited

praise. <sup>291</sup> Al-Ghazālī relates an anecdote concerning the second Caliph 'Umar, who returned to a secretary a letter where the S in bismillāh {'In the name of God'} was not legible. 'Umar said,

"First make the S of bismillāh legible; then you may return to your post." <sup>292</sup>

Pens were cut from reeds and slanted. <sup>293</sup> Al-Sūlī said that for the writing of Arabic, Persian and Hebrew the slant was required to run from the right, while for Greek writing, pens slanted to the left. <sup>294</sup> Yaḥyā ibn Khālīd al-Barmakī described the best pens as being "neither thin nor thick, and narrow in diameter and straight" <sup>295</sup> and the reed was cut on an extremely hard surface with a knife with a blade in the shape of a crane's bill. <sup>296</sup>

A large brass or bronze inkwell {mihbara} <sup>297</sup> with a domed lid rests on the judge's bench, just above the clerk. It appears to conform in material and dimensions to types which were popular in Persia and Mesopotamia in the 6th/12th century. <sup>298</sup> A similar bronze inkwell dated from the 5th/11th or 6th/12th centuries was found in the Khaḡānīd ruins of Muncaq-tepe. <sup>299</sup> The inkwell in the illustration is decorated, and it may be incised and inlaid with silver and copper. Ink wells also appear in Paris B.N. arabe 5847 and London B.L. or. 1200, <sup>300</sup> although these are unlike our Saljūq example <sup>301</sup> and have flat tops. We learn that the inkwell of the Cairo Chief Qādī referred to above was silver and came from the "citadel treasury"; <sup>302</sup> this material obviously reflected his senior status.

According to Ibn al-Ṣābī, an incorruptible usher {ḥājib} also appears to have been an indispensable figure in court, together with



a trustworthy deputy for work which the judge personally could not undertake. <sup>303</sup> These persons do not appear to figure in the illustration. The two other seated men may be court officials, such as witnesses, or assessors. They are facing each other and are perhaps quietly discussing points of law. Al-Kindī informs us that before al-Manṣūr's time

"only witnesses known to be of good repute were accepted. Others were either openly rejected or, in case they were absolutely unknown, inquiries were made regarding them from their neighbours. But now, as there is such a lot of false swearing, secret inquiries are made regarding the witnesses; that is to say, a list of men fit to be called as witnesses is prepared. The result is that not reliability but inclusion in the prepared list is now the passport to the witness-box; the word 'witness' {shahīd} signifying such a definite individual." <sup>304</sup>

This drawing up of an official list of witnesses by a qāḍī was a practice, according to Mez, "which has continued up to the present day." <sup>305</sup> A fixed number of assessors is then chosen by the qāḍī from the witness list, to assist him in his work. <sup>306</sup> Such transformation of witnesses, who were originally a band of respectable and trustworthy men, into a permanent body of officials, took place in the 3rd/10th century. <sup>307</sup>

Mez suggests that witnesses may be "the resurrected notaries of the pre-Islamic empire". <sup>308</sup> A 4th/11th century diary account describes the procedure, and runs,

"On Tuesday, second day of the month the Shaykh Abū'l-Hasan ibn al-Shuhūrī took the oath as a shāhid {notary} at the place of the Qāḍī'l-Qudāt Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Damghānī, together with Ibn al-Juhrūmī and Ibn Ahmad al-Zanjānī." <sup>309</sup>

It may be that this process arose from the needs of the burgeoning mercantile class, for the prudent merchant would obviously choose the best-known and approved candidates for notarial confirmation of his business documents. However, as the incident being illustrated occurred on "a day of general concourse and gathering of people" <sup>310</sup> these two other figures may simply be people awaiting their turn to present their cases.

The scene conforms generally to the description of the Chief Qāḍī's court and his entourage in Cairo, where an account describes him sitting on a dais with silken cushion, with his assessors ranged according to seniority, and surrounded by court servants and clerks. <sup>311</sup> Buchtal has pointed out the similarity in representation of qāḍī scenes to certain miniatures of judgment scenes in Syriac manuscripts, both as to human types and composition. <sup>312</sup> In this regard, one might also compare judgement scenes in the Paris B.N. 3465, Kalīla wa Dimna. <sup>313</sup>

Despite the wealth of architectural features, there is no distraction from the human drama being enacted. Indeed, the architecture is employed to dramatic effect and complemented by eloquent hand and body gestures and facial expressions. There is more than a suggestion here of the khayal al-ẓill or shadow play.

Our Leningrad S.23 illustration, therefore, with its qāḍī in prescribed dress, plaintiff and defendant, witnesses and scribe might be construed as a typical lawcourt scene which is

recognisable by a Muslim audience. Here is an instance where the substance of the "case" **was** a pretext on the author's part for the setting in a court of law in Ṣa'da, Yemen, because a complaint regarding the recalcitrance of one's son would hardly merit a judge's opinion {fatwā}. There is evidently satirical intent on the part of al-Harīrī {which would have been a contributory factor to criticism of him in certain quarters}, for when Abū Zayd and his son sped away with cash from the qāḍī, the father said,

"Let him whom his fell fortune has treated ill repair to Ṣa'da town and her qāḍī. His bounty shames the bounteous that went before; his justice baffles those who come after." 314

One might turn now to the treatment of Maqāma 37 in Paris B.N. arabe 3929, where the illustration appears at a similar point in the text as the above miniature. The three lines of Arabic above it read,

"... who regarded the crowd with a discriminating look,  
And then stated that he had a most untractable opponent,  
And in less time than a spark shines, or one points with a  
finger,  
A youth was brought in, who seemed {bold} as a lion..." 315

This is the same point in the text as the Leningrad S.23 illustrator chose, as we have already seen.

The miniature is reproduced overleaf.



Following his usual practice, this artist has a large caption in gold thulūth script running down the right hand side of the page, which reads ... "A picture of the qādi, and the youth {who} had been brought in."

We have here a variation of a throne, with the qādi sitting on

a patterned cushion, and Abū Zayd and his son are once more acting out their quarrel before him. The qādī wears white robes and a white turban, and his black taylasān falls down over his shoulders. There are no architectural features, and it is the taylasān which confirms that the seated figure is a qādī; otherwise he is at least recognisable as a person of substance by his pose, which implies authority. He seems to have the requisite presence and gravity of mien to recall a famous predecessor, al-Māwardī, who died in the mid-5th/11th century. 316

The two figures at the left hand side are obviously al-Hārith and Abū Zayd, who are Arabs, while the son is oriental-looking and has pigtailed. Perhaps this artist has adapted a standard eastern enthronement scene by substituting an Arab judge for the ruler and retaining the foreign youth as the requisite ghulām or youthful page.

Yet another lawcourt scene occurs in Istanbul E.E. 2916, where Abū Zayd and his wife air their matrimonial grievances in Maqāma 45. She accuses him of maltreating her and of withholding conjugal rights; Abū Zayd pleads extreme poverty and the inability to provide for any children of the union. This is a further ruse to obtain charity from the qādī and it is a successful follow-up to their tricks in Maqāma 9. The text runs,

"... {when} there had appealed to him a worn wight in worn raiment, and a fair one in faded finery. The old man was minded to speak, and explain the object of his suit, but the wench cut short his peroration, and checked his bark."

and continues...

"Then she removed from her face the flap of kerchief, and indited with the tongue of an impudent shrew..." 317





Although the reproduction is unclear, one can make out the judge seated on a squat carved wooden throne with heavy turned legs, attentively listening to the plaintiff and defendant. He

wears a light ṭaylasān, and he apparently sits on a cushion on a circular carpet which has a central band of cruciform design. Parallels for this type of seat and its coverings occur elsewhere in Maqāmāt manuscripts, <sup>318</sup> in Syriac manuscript illustration {with slight variation}, <sup>319</sup> and in a Marzubān-nāma manuscript 216 in the Istanbul Archaeology Museum, dated 698/1299. <sup>320</sup> Ibn Baṭṭūta confirmed that figures of authority apparently used a similar seat, for on a visit to Baghdād in 727/1327, he described a Professor of Law in the Mustanṣiriya

"seated under a small wooden cupola on a chair covered by a carpet, speaking with much sedateness and gravity of mien, he being clothed in black and wearing a turban...". <sup>321</sup>

The architectural features here are standard and the setting is less elaborate than elsewhere in this manuscript. The lawcourt is presumably a sizeable building, for there are three wind towers. An interesting addition is the drape hanging from the ceiling at centre stage, which echoes the carpet in its semi-circular shape. This seems to be a version of the canvas or felt khaysh, which al-Ṭabarī reported as in general use in 'Abbāsid times for cooling by evaporation, <sup>322</sup> and which was described by the poet Ibn al-Nadīm thus,

"The khaysh was made wet inside the dome  
Which called forth winter and removed the heat of summer;  
And the cord caused drops of water to fall  
From it on the ground as if pearls were being scattered.  
If the khaysh were set in hell,  
Its coolness would certainly overcome the burning heat  
of the fire." <sup>323</sup>

Al-Thaʿālibī reports that its use was introduced for al-Manṣūr, <sup>324</sup> and also that an unnamed poet, cursing Isfahān, satirised that city in the following terms,

"When I was there in summer, I had to sell my framework of canvas sheeting for keeping cool, {and in one of the winter months I pawned my brazier}." <sup>325</sup>

Al-Muqaddasī's late 4th/10th century account throws further light on the possibly non-Islamic origin of the khaysh, for we read that during preaching in Egypt a canvas awning was slung "such as was done in the circus in Hellenic days." <sup>326</sup>

The positioning of the contraption in the illustration in an air current below the wind-tower tends to confirm that this is a khaysh in use in a building which is constructed to permit through-ventilation. Al-Muqaddasī also recorded the use of the khaysh in Baṣra and Shīrāz. <sup>327</sup> The three towers, then, may not be mere architectural whim or artistic licence. Similar towers also appear on a fort in the Edinburgh Rashīd al-Dīn manuscript 20 Jamīʿ al-Tawārīkh; these, however, are more likely to be kiosks for fighting. <sup>328</sup>

A scroll pattern can clearly be seen on the khaysh; this perhaps represents a finer, decorative drape over the plain felt or canvas fabric, for Arabic literature mentions coloured gauze which draped the felt. <sup>329</sup> This feature also figures prominently on f.77 of this manuscript in the 23rd tale. <sup>330</sup> Al-Sharīshī describes in his commentary on the Maqāmāt how rosewater, as an

alternative to plain water, was sometimes used to dispense fragrance.<sup>331</sup> A very similar decorated drape with a leafy scroll pattern occurs on a mīnā'ī plate; <sup>332</sup> this may be a khaysh, or it may represent one of several conventions which painters of mīnā'ī ware and manuscript miniaturists shared. <sup>333</sup>

Al-Ḥārith sits patiently observing yet another ruse by Abū Zayd and his wife. Abū Zayd tries eloquently to make his point, but his wife brazenly gestures to the qādī with her outstretched hand open to plead her own case,

"So bid him show me henceforth sweet kindness, or make him drink the bitter draught of divorce." <sup>334</sup>

Despite the couple being described in the text as "a worn wight in worn raiment, and a fair one in faded finery", the pair appear to be clad in patterned bourgeois clothing, like al-Ḥārith; swirling folds are delineated. The men wear sandals {ni'āl}, while the woman has boots. Women's footwear was usually made of coloured leather, and was similar in shape to men's fine light boots. <sup>335</sup>

Finally, one might turn to London B.L. or. 1200 for an illustration of a qādī in Maqāma 8, where Abū Zayd and his son play out a drama which Chenery describes as "so essentially Arabic as almost to forbid intelligible translation". <sup>336</sup>

There has been a long preamble by the pair in their wrangle over a slavegirl, and at this juncture the judge, his patience patently exhausted, peremptorily instructs them,

London B. L. or. 1200, f.22:2B5, Mq. 8.



We have here a simple judgment scene. There are no architectural elements, and the qādī sits on the rug-draped throne with heavy turned legs which appears to be a standard fitment in interior scenes in this manuscript; 338 on this



occasion the carpet is rectangular. The judge wears a long white ṭaylasān over his dark turban and robe and he is more reminiscent of a Biblical prophet than an Arab; this effect is heightened by the halo. The two central figures must be Abū Zayd and his son, who is shown as a mature man; al-Ḥārith stands to the left. Garments are the standard Arab robes, worn over light trousers {sarāwil}, and their folds are delicately delineated; only al-Ḥārith's sleeves bear ṭirāz bands. The ordinary leather sandal {naʿl} is shown.

Both the text above the miniature and the ṭaylasān confirm that this is a lawcourt scene; the format has been repeated elsewhere in other courtrooms in this manuscript.<sup>339</sup> The governor of Marw in the 38th tale is depicted in the same manner, but his turban replaces the judge's ṭaylasān. Here, the judge's impassive impression conforms to his impatience and bemusement. Apart from Abū Zayd's pointing finger, the general impression of the illustration is wooden and lifeless. To be fair, this feature is less evident when one sees the actual manuscript.

These few examples of illustrated tales give some insight into their setting within the Islamic world, points of law, the function and dress of the judiciary, and their suitability or otherwise for high office. Two further judgment scenes, in Maqāmāt 9 and 40, are analysed in the section on "Women in the Maqāmāt", and the 'judgment' pronounced in Maqāma 43 is illustrated in "The Bedouin".

No independent architectural form for the courtroom has emerged from this typical selection of Maqāmāt miniatures, and

this also proved to be the case for the higher court presided over by the governor. The lawcourts depicted follow standard architectural conventions, but it can be other features, such as text, captions, costume and furnishings, which demonstrate the authority vested in the incumbent in office and precisely define the setting.

Perfect justice, as posited in the Counsel for Kings, should be completely impartial; in the eyes of the law, the unknown litigant of no repute and the well-known litigant of high worldly rank and dignity are equal. <sup>340</sup> The Prophet said,

"God on high created nothing finer on earth than justice. Justice is God's balance on earth, and any man who upholds this balance will be carried by Him to Paradise." <sup>341</sup>

It is heartening to see how the scales of justice favoured the apparently-impoverished Abū Zayd, who invariably received reward at the hands of the high and mighty, even if one could not always approve of his motivation. This, in turn, counterbalances the element of satire sometimes directed at figures of authority on the part of the author and the artists.

\*\*\*\*\*

## CHAPTER 4.

### Trade

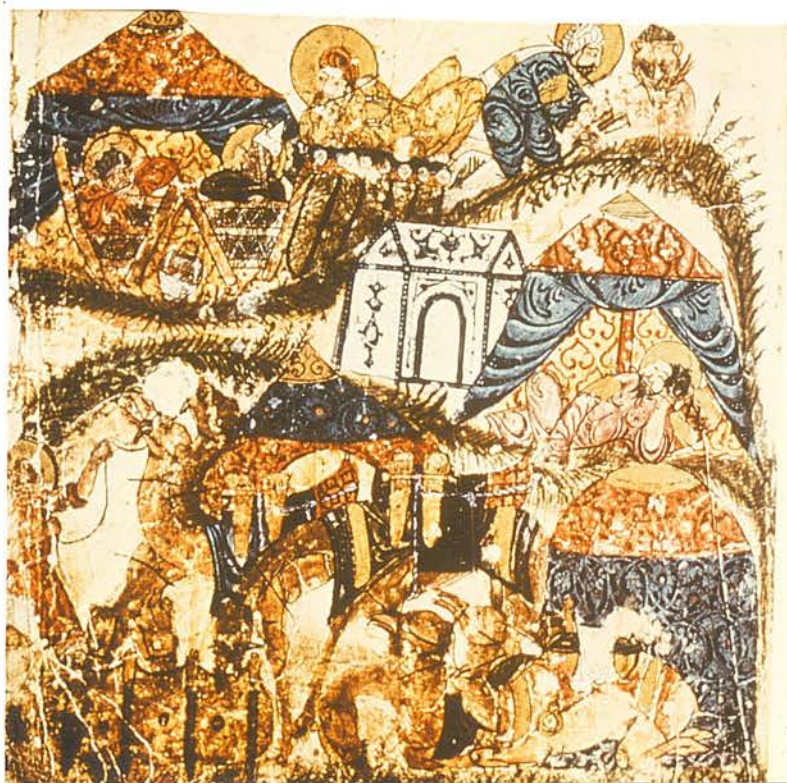
{a} The Caravan.

In Maqāma 4, al-Ḥarīth is travelling to Damietta, in Egypt, and when the caravan has come to rest for the night he overhears two men discussing duty towards one's fellows. He is entranced by the rhetorical speech of the elder man, despite his display of selfishness and the cynicism of the worldly wise.

The script above the Leningrad S.23 illustration on page 22 represents the reply of the younger man to the question "'How should thy conduct be regulated towards thy neighbour?'" , and reads

" ... And behave kindly to a comrade, though he be ungrateful,  
And shew preference to a friend above an own brother,  
And fulfil all my obligations towards an associate,  
Though he repays me not with a tenth of my due." <sup>1</sup>

This speech occurs at the beginning of the tale. The manuscript is damaged below the miniature, and the one line of Arabic there is unreadable.



At the top left of the painting a traveller in a saffron robe and an orange turban is lolling on bales of merchandise. In Maqāma 12 there is a reference to "the corded and the sealed", that is, the goods which were corded in bales or sealed up in boxes.<sup>2</sup> Usāma ibn Munqidh described how on an expedition in connection with the campaigns against the Franks in the early 6th/12th century,

"whenever I wanted to stop, I would put the bags in the centre of the rug, fold its end around them, spread another rug on top, and sleep over the bags." <sup>3</sup>

This utilisation of the cargo is seen to even greater effect in al-Wāsiṭī's miniature for this 4th tale on f.9v, which is reproduced in the list of illustrations. <sup>4</sup> While this afforded the traveller some degree of comfort, there would also be the consideration of the security of a valuable cargo.

Large bales of shop merchandise are being carried off by thieves in the Paris B.N. arabe 3465 Kalīla wa Dimna manuscript. <sup>5</sup> All these are sausage-shaped packages which are easily borne by one man, and they could presumably be packed and carried by pack animals in a type of litter. Similar bales and packages occur in the caravan scene where the Prophet is being anointed in the Edinburgh Rashīd al-Dīn manuscript 20, Jamī' al-Tawārīkh or Universal History, of 1306. <sup>6</sup>

The man in the saffron garment in our illustration is looking with interest at two people occupying a double camel-litter who are leaning over the basketwork sides and are engaged in deep conversation. An illustration of two women in a double camel-litter appears in the foreground of the frontispiece of the Vienna Kitāb al-Tiryāq. <sup>7</sup> A variation of this type of litter occurs on the Blacas ewer in the British Museum, which was made in Mosul in 1232. <sup>8</sup> Fāṭimid examples of similar litters are also found on ivory, <sup>9</sup> wood <sup>10</sup> and metalwork, <sup>11</sup> and the illustration therefore seems to portray a contemporary practical mode of travel.

Abū Zayd is presumably the figure with the blue turban and the



red robe, and the youth with the black robe and the white pointed hat with an upturned brim is his son; his features are indistinct. According to the text, they were "each of them clad in a pair of ragged garments", <sup>12</sup> although this is not discernible. The lad should be wearing a turban, for he is an Arab. Throughout the Maqāmāt in general there seems to have been no model for Arab youths, and Abū Zayd's son was perhaps appropriated from another setting as a type. Similar hats are worn by men on the frontispiece of the mid-7th/13th century Vienna Kitāb al-Tiryaq; <sup>13</sup> these men have long braided hair, almond-shaped eyes and full faces and they are possibly of Central Asian origin. White pointed hats are also found in the early 8th/14th century Edinburgh Rashīd al-Dīn Jamī' al-Tawārīkh, <sup>14</sup> and the Demotte Shāh-nāma. <sup>15</sup>

Al-Hārith must be the man who is dozing against a cushion in the tent among the "dew-moistened hillocks" <sup>16</sup> which were to be the "resting place for the white camels". <sup>17</sup> He could not see the two men whose conversation so captivated him, and he was unable to identify the pair until the morning, when he "began to follow the direction of the voices of the night". <sup>18</sup> They were, predictably, Abū Zayd and his son.

The cook is busy preparing the evening meal in a large cooking pot, at a fireplace built with rocks; this genre detail occurs in other encampments. <sup>19</sup> Camels rest and graze in the foreground, and a man busies himself with feeding them. Their trappings include saddles with two pairs of v-shaped carved wooden legs which sit astride the humps. Two saddles are covered in a textile with a pattern of crosses within hexagonal lozenges. This is a popular

contemporary design in Maqāmāt manuscripts generally, which recurs in this manuscript. <sup>20</sup> It is also found in the Washington 1224 Dioscorides De Materia Medica in the Freer Gallery, and Ibn Bakhtīshū's Na'at al-Hayawān manuscript in the British Museum. <sup>21</sup> The cruciform shape also manifests itself in the form of contemporary lustreware tiles from Kāshān. <sup>22</sup>

Under these saddles there is a fine dark rug with gold-coloured braid, and one finds in Maqāma 22 a reference to a "cushion saddle" {waliya}, <sup>23</sup> which was a cushion placed on the back of the camel, under the saddle. This feature is apparently not illustrated. The saddlery is held in place by a pale blue cord. A large ring is attached to the trappings of the camel at the right foreground. This suggests that at least some camels walked in pairs, one behind the other, with poles or ropes passing through the rings and with a type of litter slung on them. There is no indication of the merchandise carried. Ibn Khallikān tells how Ṣāhib ibn 'Abbād, who died in 385/995 turned down the post of wazīr to Nūḥ ibn Manṣūr, on the grounds {among others} that "it would require four hundred camels" to transport only his books. <sup>24</sup>

The very unusual contraption at the left foreground must be a portable fodder trough. There are four rows of stakes with metal mounts at either side, and the sides may be canvas. It is perhaps some sort of sack with rings which could be secured by a cord which passed through the rings when on the move. The rings could also be looped over the stakes when the beasts were fed. It may be a

larger version of the simāt or round 'tablecloth' with rings which closed up; it functioned both as a food container and as a cloth. The simāt mentioned in the text of Maqāma 30 <sup>25</sup> is shown only in Paris B.N.3929, and is reproduced in the list of illustrations of that manuscript. <sup>26</sup> A feeding trough would allow the valuable pack animals to be kept safely in the one place instead of letting them loose to forage for themselves.

One of the camels is cream-coloured and the others are pale brown. The text describes them as a mixture of the red and white breeds {a'yas}. <sup>27</sup> The artist uses the camels here to add a sense of perspective to the composition, as he did in Maqāma 43, when they appear between the rows of Bedouin tents, <sup>28</sup> and their craning necks and spindly legs convey a sense of movement and bustle. Apart from the fire, there is no indication of any source of light for later in the evening. The physical setting has been expanded to take in genre elements. It has been achieved by allowing the grass and plants to meander and create three separate planes, and it is very successful and a reflection of the restive movements of the animals.

The tents are of two basic shapes, pointed and rounded, and they are made from a remarkable variety of plain and decorated coloured textiles. Blues and reds predominate. The two upper tents have yellow interior drapes with a heart-shaped pattern which appears elsewhere in this manuscript on stuccowork. <sup>29</sup> The designs on tent exteriors are mostly floral whorls, but the pattern on the top of al-Ḥārith's tent echoes crenellated friezes. <sup>30</sup> The tent

folds are perhaps over-elaborate, but they give a good indication of the amount of material in the construction. Some tents are shown as free-standing structures and without guy ropes or pegs.

Ibn Jubayr travelled in 1183 with the hajj caravan of the Amīr of Iraq. He described the caravan as

"beautiful to look upon and superbly provided, with large handsome tents and erections, and wonderful pavilions and awnings, and of an aspect such that I have never seen more remarkable." <sup>31</sup>

It was a piece of "regal splendour" and

"all this erection was held firm by thick linen cords with pegs driven {into the ground} and the whole was arranged with remarkable construction." <sup>32</sup>

Al-Ḥārith's tent has a strong central pillar, and it is likely that the pointed tent at the top left of the illustration was similarly erected. Guys or a trellis framework possibly held up these walls. Each tent has a fabric 'finial'. This is a decorative item which is likely to be reinforced, for it would carry the weight and be attached to the pole. Here the food is being cooked in the open, which obviates the need for a hole as a smoke vent.

All the top pieces differ in colour from the lower portions, and this appears to indicate that layers of variegated textiles were employed. It may be that the tops were specially woven in one piece and the sides came separately; interior hangings would bridge gaps and act as draught-proof insulation. By day the thick walls would keep out light and heat. Ibn Taghribirdī's Chronicles mention a Tent Market {sūq al-khiyām} {singular, khayma} in the north-east quarter of Cairo in the 9th/15th century. <sup>33</sup>

Andrews has studied the dwellings of nomads in Central Asia in the present day, and he gives a fascinating account of tent types and their construction; <sup>34</sup> this seems to hold as well for the 7th/13th-century Maqāmāt tents, where the same basic priorities would have to be considered, that is, compatibility with the natural environment and portability.

The cylindrical tent at right foreground is composed of four elements. The wall would be built up with a trellis framework; a doorway was set into it, although this is not evident here; the dome of the roof appears to be carried on a wheel-shaped contraption and finally, cross-struts probably spanned the top of the trellis and were slotted into the rim of the roof wheel. <sup>35</sup> Sections of trellis might be joined with thongs, <sup>36</sup> and the construction would vary according to the shape and size of tent required.

The fabric for the blue lower wall of this cylindrical tent has evidently been cut as a trapezoid, that is, wider at the bottom than the top. The semi-spherical top is in two pieces; this practice has persisted and is confirmed by Andrews, who mentions 2 semi-circular pieces of material {felt}. <sup>37</sup> The modern Central Asian tents are made from felt, but an outer drapery can also be added. <sup>38</sup> That seems to be the case with the Maqāmāt tents.

An unexplained small white and blue structure stands in the centre of the illustration. Its decoration is elaborate and stylised, and this lends it a certain rigidity and an air of



permanence suggestive of a small house or pavilion; its starkness is out of place within the fluid landscape setting, and it is at odds with the convoluted folds and swirling floral decoration of the other tents.

Grabar <sup>39</sup> is tempted to associate this small type of tent with the official maḥmil which was carried by pilgrims to Mecca, and also to conclude that the encampment scenes were derived from a cycle of paintings which dealt with the pilgrimage. In fact, an identical type of tent does stand beside the pilgrims in this artist's depiction of Abū Zayd's sermon in Maqāma 31. <sup>40</sup>

Ibn Jubayr's description of the hajj entourage of the Amīr of Iraq also bears out Grabar's linking of this type of tent with the pilgrimage, for he related how the encampment was

"surrounded by a linen screen, like a wall, to form a sort of closed-in garden or an ornamented building. Within this were the pitched pavilions, all black on a white background and dappled and variegated as if they were flowers in a garden." <sup>41</sup>

In Maqāma 26, <sup>42</sup> the Leningrad S.23 artist has painted a much more explicitly regal tent with a flagpole and banners within a superbly executed and decorated enclosure, and it may be that this small white and blue pavilion, whatever its purpose, has been borrowed from a royal cycle of illustrations and appropriated by this painter as part and parcel of **any** encampment.

However, in the light of my analysis of al-Wāsitī's maḥmil, I believe that this rigid blue and white structure is merely a small tent, and not the official maḥmil. The Leningrad S.23 miniature for Maqāma 26 is reproduced below for comparative purposes.



Tents occur elsewhere in the Maqāmāt illustrations. The most attractive type of domestic tent which is not made from animal hair in the Maqāmāt miniatures appears in Istanbul E.E. 2916 on f.92 in Maqāma 26, which was reproduced in the section on Arab Governors. <sup>43</sup> Other tent types are a pointed, rectangular shape in Paris B. N. 5847, <sup>44</sup> a rounded tent in Leningrad, S.23, <sup>45</sup> and an elaborate

version with slightly sloping sides in Paris B.N. 6094. <sup>46</sup>

Variations of tents also occur in the contemporary Istanbul, Hazine 841 Varqa va Gulshah manuscript, <sup>47</sup> and one finds the ridge tents of the forces of Buyid Majd al-Dawla in the later Rashīd al-Dīn manuscript in Edinburgh. <sup>48</sup> Curved top tents with sloping sides appear at the pre-Islamic Arabian fair illustrated in the Edinburgh al-Bīrūnī Athār al-Bāqiya. <sup>49</sup>

A very similar small rigid tent, with a ridged roof and vertical walls is found in the Demotte Shāh-nāma of 1330-3; <sup>50</sup> it is also predominantly white, but the stylised decoration is black. Other variations occur in the slightly later Stephens Shāh-nāma, <sup>51</sup> and of course the very colourful tents in later Persian manuscripts are particularly decorative. <sup>52</sup> Tent illustration was not confined to manuscripts, and there is a similar tent, with fewer poles, on the mīnā'ī beaker in Washington's Freer Gallery. <sup>53</sup> It is obvious that the tent was very much a part of the cultural landscape at that time.

The tents in the 4th tale under discussion are not the simple black hair tents of the nomads depicted by this artist in Maqāma 43, <sup>54</sup> but perhaps, considering Usāma's remarks, those of a mercantile caravan which had to provide the maximum comfort for people who spent much of their time travelling. It is impossible to say whether even the tent of a well-to-do merchant would be made from such fine fabrics, but it is undeniable that other provisions were of the most basic in a harsh desert environment. Ibn Khallikān quotes the 3rd/9th century poet Muslim ibn al-Walīd al-Anṣārī in his Wafayāt, whose advice for the weary traveller is apposite,

"Let not the longing of your soul for family and home prevent your enjoying an easy life in comfort; in every country where you choose to dwell, you will find a family and {friendly} neighbours in place of those you left behind." <sup>55</sup>

It is not clear who organised a caravan, but it is possible that people were contracted to do so, for the hire system was widespread in the Islamic world; people could rent houses, water cisterns, and even clothing. <sup>56</sup> The Kitāb al-Aghānī tells how carpets could be hired for festive occasions, <sup>57</sup> and I have personal knowledge of this practice today in the Arabian Gulf. Perhaps the organisers were middle-men who provided a service of animals, accommodation and food, made arrangements with the tribesmen whose territories they passed through for safe conduct and the like, and charged a fee.

Agents were certainly appointed to transact business. Al-Miskawayh reports that the Amīr Bakhtiyār became estranged from 'Adūd al-Dawla by forbidding

"the agent of the latter in Baghdād to purchase horses and commodities which he was in the habit of ordering and had been permitted to obtain." <sup>58</sup>

Further confirmation is given by al-Dhahabī, who relates that according to Ibn al-Athīr, in 462/1069-70 merchants were transporting the personal effects of the Fāṭimid Caliph of Egypt, al-Mustansir bi'llāh. <sup>59</sup> The goods were pillaged by military slaves and sold to pay for food during a famine. Boxes were overflowing with about 70,000 brocade robes, 11,000 military vests and 20,000 swords encrusted with precious gems or gold. <sup>60</sup> In the same period, Nāṣir-ī Khusraw received a blank letter of credit from Aswan addressed to his agent {wakīl} in 'Aydhab. It read,

"Give Nāṣir all that he may demand, obtain a receipt from him, and debit the sum to me".<sup>61</sup>

The Karkh quarter of Baghdād included an area for the hire of beasts of burden, principally camels, horses and donkeys.<sup>62</sup> The usual means of transport for people were camels and horses, i.e. riding animals,<sup>63</sup> and presumably the donkeys were reserved for carrying merchandise. Given the degree of planning of the markets, and Ibn Taghribirdī's report that the Tent Market {sūq al-khiyām} in 9th/15th century Cairo was in the vicinity of the Horse Market {sūq al-khayl} and the Farriers' Oratory {muṣallā al-bayāṭira},<sup>64</sup> it is likely that whoever organised a caravan would find his requirements readily at hand in the market place.

Kai Kā'ūs's advice to merchants on the calculation of their profit percentages is relevant to al-Ḥārith,

"If on dry land an accident occurs through which your goods are lost, there is a chance that your life will be saved; whereas at sea there is peril to both."

and

"You may find a replacement for your goods, but not for your life."<sup>65</sup>

In other words, the imported merchandise had to be priced high enough to provide a form of life insurance. This tends to reinforce the need for a talisman for the voyage to Oman in Maqāma 39, {although it should be pointed out that Abū Zayd also prepared one for the hazardous desert crossing in Maqāma 12}.

There does seem to be some suggestion of a degree of interdependence between rulers and merchants. By the end of the 4th/10th century the bourgeoisie was able to assert itself as a



powerful force in the socio-economic sphere of the Islamic world, and by the 5th/11th century it reached its zenith. <sup>66</sup>

On the question of danger, it is clear that on occasion there was government intervention in the provision of safe passage. This was not necessarily altruistic on the part of the rulers, for there would be a need to secure frontiers and establish customs posts for the levy of import duties. Nizām al-Mulk reports that early in the 5th/11th century there was an enormous gathering of merchants in Rayy. <sup>67</sup> Mahmūd, the Ghaznavid Sultan, "despatched them with an amīr and a hundred and fifty horsemen as escort", and he reassured them, "Do not be anxious, for I am sending some troops in your tracks". <sup>68</sup>

This genre illustration sums up well a contemporary sight which may have been adapted from the iconography of the pilgrimage, from the panoply of royal tented enclosures or a combination of both.

The Wāsiṭī miniature of the duped merchants at the end of this same tale is reproduced overleaf for interest's sake. Al-Ḥārith and his companions had handsomely rewarded Abū Zayd and his son for their eloquence. The pair made off swiftly on a pretext, and the merchants foolishly waited for some time for their return. Al-Ḥārith eventually discovered a message on his camel saddle which contained a Qur'ānic allusion to etiquette and formed Abū Zayd's justification for his behaviour. Al-Ḥārith is showing it to the others in his own mitigation because they, too, have been fooled. The illustration highlights the naivety of men who were well-travelled and experienced in the ways of the world.



ii. {b} The khān

Maqāma 29 is set in a khān in Wāsiṭ, where al-Ḥārith has suffered a reversal of fortune in trade. He sets the scene as he relates how he stopped over at Wāsiṭ and arrived at a khān "frequented by a jumble from every land, and a medley of

travellers".<sup>69</sup> Because of his reduced circumstances, he foolishly agrees to Abū Zayd's plan to act as his marriage broker in an alliance between himself and a suitably wealthy but unknown bride. Abū Zayd has assured al-Ḥārith that he will deliver a splendid wedding speech in praise of the 'groom' which will greatly impress the other merchants {and presumably encourage their generosity}.

Such were Abū Zayd's oratorical powers and al-Ḥārith's love for his old friend that he relished this plan and naively enthused,

"Now he roused my spirits more by the description of the address to be indited than of the bride to be displayed."<sup>70</sup>

Abū Zayd invited the 'guests' to his room, where he consulted his astrolabe and almanac and made elaborate calculations as to the auspiciousness of day and time. Al-Ḥārith has invariably given the impression of being a decent and pious man, and he would have done well to ponder the words of al-Zamakhsharī, who concluded in his commentary on verses 25 and 26 of Sura 72,

"He does not reveal what is concealed but to him whom He is pleased with ... That entails the abolishment of divination and astrology because the diviners and the astrologers are very far from His approval."<sup>71</sup>

Abū Zayd offered the gathering sweetmeats and he set out "a feast to be remembered for aye".<sup>72</sup> This turns out to be prophetic in more ways than one.

The text at al-Wāsiṭī's illustration reads ...

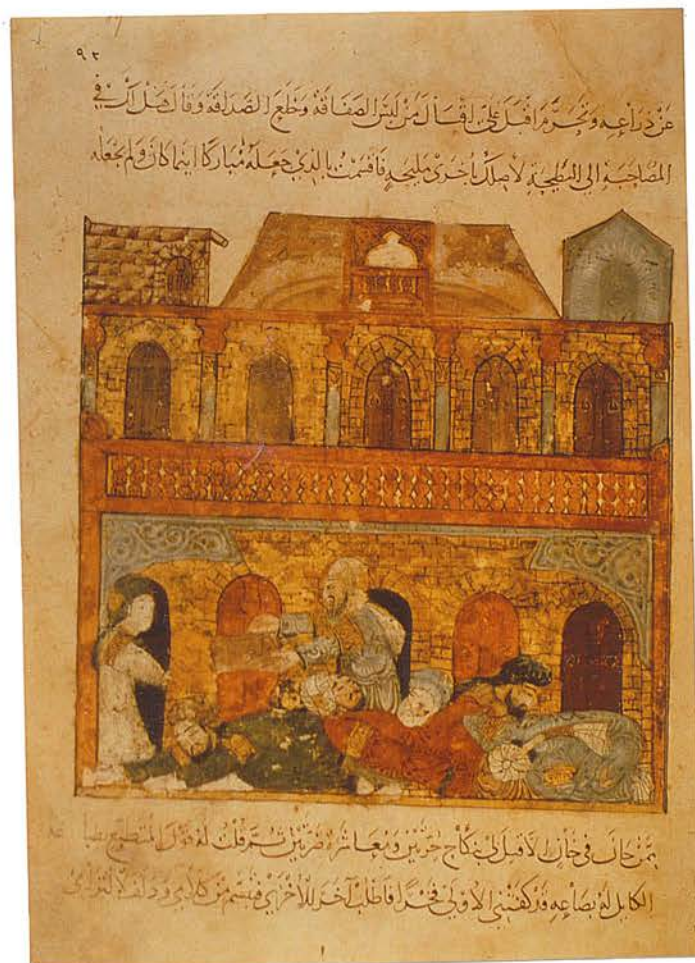
"{Then after he had bagged that which he had chosen, and tied it in bundles}, and had tucked up his sleeves and girded himself, he accosted me as accosts one who has donned impudence, and arrayed himself with the garb of sincere friendship, saying 'Hast thou a mind to accompany me to the Batiha {swamplands} so that I may wed thee to another fair one?'"<sup>73</sup>

Al-Ḥārith angrily swore by Allāh that he would not go with him,

but Abū Zayd merely

"smiled at my speech and stepped forward to embrace me, {but I turned from him my cheek and showed him my repugnance.}" <sup>74</sup>

Paris, B.N. arabe 5847, f.89:6A6, Mq. 29



Abū Zayd's son stands at the left hand side, and his father is passing a package to him over the recumbent figures of five men, who illustrate the Qur'ānic allusion in the text "prone upon their faces ... like the roots of rotten palm-trees" <sup>75</sup> The horrified



al-Hārith has disassociated himself from this scene, for he had realised that the sweetmeats on trays of khalanj wood were doctored with seeds of the henbane plant {banj}; <sup>76</sup> al-Hārith is not shown.

There seems to be some confusion in the terms banj and hashīsh; strictly speaking, banj was obtained from hyoscyamus or henbane plant, and hashīsh from the cannabis sativa or hemp plant, <sup>77</sup> but the terms seem to have been interchangeable. The use of banj to stupefy potential victims was well known among the Banū Sāsān or criminal underclasses of 'beggar princes', <sup>78</sup> of whom Abū Zayd claimed to be one in Maqāmāt 2 and 49. Chapter Five of the 7th/13th Syrian author al-Jawbarī's Kashf al-Asrār, The Disclosure of the Secrets, reveals that one of the current practices was to

"mix together a concoction of one part each of the seed of black Indian hemp, wax from the ear {wasakh al-udhn}, and basal al-fa'r or squills, and then they put the resultant substance into any kind of food whatsoever. The person eating it goes to sleep immediately." <sup>79</sup>

At the popular, Arabian Nights, level one reads in the Tale of the Second Eunuch, Kāfūr, how a Caliph's wife, Zubayda, instructed a slave-girl to drug her mistress, Qut al-Qulūb, either by placing banj in her nostrils while asleep, or into a drink. <sup>80</sup> Abū Dulaf did not criticise the beggar chiefs who stupefied their young apprentices with drugged food or wine and then committed homosexual assaults on them. <sup>81</sup> The Mamlūk poet Abū'l-Faṭḥ ibn Sayyid al-Nās wryly reported that Sūfīs of that period were characterised by their

"copulating with pretty boys, drinking wine, eating hashīsh, dancing, singing and pimping". <sup>82</sup>

An illustration of the banj plant occurs in al-'Umari's 8th/14th century manual of herbs <sup>83</sup> and it was used as a pain-



killer. <sup>84</sup> Common folk might have learned of its properties through the shadow play, {khayal al-ẓill}, where the druggist, 'Usaila al-ma'ājīni or "Little drop of honey" concocted therapeutic remedies; <sup>85</sup> the term ma'ājīn applied equally to narcotics such as opium and hashīsh. <sup>86</sup>

Although al-Jawbarī and others condemned the use of banj, <sup>87</sup> Ṣafi al-Dīn appears to advocate its use in his Diwān. <sup>88</sup> He sought to justify this by saying that it was neither specifically denounced by law nor unanimously denounced by consensus {ijmā'}. <sup>89</sup> Something of this ambiguity towards drug abuse can be gleaned from a report by Ibn Iyās, who said that in Egypt in 665/1266 Sultan Baybars ordered that the levy on hashīsh was to be suppressed, and the drug burned instead. <sup>90</sup>

It was possible, apparently, for drugs to be obtained with comparative ease, for a 6th/12th century report by Ibn 'Abdūn on the ordinances of the Seville market recommends that

"Only a skilled physician should sell potions and electuaries and mix drugs. These things should not be bought from the grocer, or the apothecary, whose only concern is to take money without knowledge. They spoil the prescriptions and kill the sick, for they mix medicines which are unknown and of contrary effect." <sup>91</sup>

Abū Zayd's talents therefore are seemingly boundless, and his unprincipled behaviour is a reflection of a fairly widespread use and abuse of narcotics in mediaeval Muslim society.

With hindsight, the visiting merchants should have been more wary of their travelling companions, for al-Dhahabī reported that in 632/1234-5 the Ayyūbid al-Ashraf constructed a mosque in Damascus on the site of a khān "reserved for debauchery and drunkenness" in the

quarter of 'Uqayba. <sup>92</sup>

Al-Wāsiṭī's khān is a very substantial brick built three-storeyed building, and it is likely that it was near the Tigris, for Route IV of al-Mustawfi's Nuzhat al-Qulūb makes it clear that Wāsiṭ was strategically placed for trade, <sup>93</sup> and al-Ḥārith described how he had stopped over "with the alighting of the fish on the dry land". <sup>94</sup>

Most of the khāns in Iraq dated around the 6th/12th-8th/14th centuries are badly damaged, or have disappeared, although one 6th/12th century fortified khān has been identified by Reitlinger in the area north-west of Mosul. <sup>95</sup>

It seems that al-Wāsiṭī's khān is an urban caravanserai. Whilst security would be important, there would be no need for the heavy fortifications required on a desolate overland trade route. It is an adaptation of a rather large house form, for it was a lodging house with a central courtyard for the foreign merchants who plied the caravan routes. <sup>96</sup>

A carved wooden ventilation shaft is set into the vaulted roof. At the left of the top storey there is a small secure 'tower' with a fixed air vent, and a wooden door; its purpose is unknown, and the exterior is much rougher than the carefully executed main building. Good ventilation would be a prerequisite in the prevailing climate, especially when animals were stabled so near the human quarters. Letters among the Cairo Geniza documents frequently contain requests from travellers for private lodgings, as some people found the noise and smell of the pack animals overpowering. <sup>97</sup> Ventilation, therefore, would be one of the main concerns of the architect, together with the practical

considerations of loading and unloading and security.

To the right of the roof elevation there is what appears to be a bluish-grey miḥrāb wall with very faint epigraphy; it perhaps represents a place where a traveller could escape from the noise and bustle downstairs to pray quietly.

Six columns run the length of the first floor gallery; they are bluish in colour, and they may be constructed in indigenous Iraqi marble, which was plentiful in the Mosul area.<sup>98</sup> Marble was widely used for decorative purposes and for the fabric of contemporary buildings in northern Iraq;<sup>99</sup> however, it was used less frequently elsewhere in Iraq, on the grounds of expense.<sup>100</sup> If the columns in this khān are marble, it is possible that al-Wāsiṭī's model for the building was endowed as a waqf by an influential and wealthy person, with the income derived from trading being given for charitable causes. For example, the income from the Mirjāniya khān, which was completed in 760/1359, together with the income from six other khānāt, wine presses, adjoining shops and other sources of revenue, contributed towards the upkeep of the Mirjāniya madrasa.<sup>101</sup>

In addition to dues and taxes levied on the population, the caliph derived revenues from his mustaghallāt, which were caravanserais and markets which were administered by the dīwān al-aqar.<sup>102</sup>

Time would be of the essence to a merchant, and his sojourn would be fairly brief; since a khān formed part of a profit-orientated activity, it would presumably not be over-ostentatious, but it would be comfortable. Syrian caravanserais were apparently

the poorest.<sup>103</sup> In 600/1203 Yāqūt mentioned a stone Ayyūbid khān between Hims and Damascus, where the road to Palmyra branched off. It was situated in "a pleasant village with a famous spring, always equally cold".<sup>104</sup>

The columns have bell-shaped capitals, and they bear a decorative frieze in a different medium. Similar capitals are found in Leningrad S.23 in the palace of the Governor of Marw,<sup>105</sup> and in the Istanbul Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā frontispieces of 686/1287,<sup>106</sup> and the bell-shaped motif also appeared in the al-Azhar mosque in Cairo.<sup>107</sup> The balustrade at first floor level is made from carved red wood and the balusters are identical to those in al-Wāsiṭī's Banū Ḥarām Mosque in Baṣra in Maqāma 48.<sup>108</sup>

The area below the gallery is framed by a very large pair of bluish-grey spandrels; these are deeply carved with an arabesque leaf scroll pattern and they echo the semi-circular arches of the lower doorways. In the Baghdād area the rounded archway seems to have been mainly confined to the windows of some buildings.<sup>109</sup>

There are five rooms upstairs and five below, and they all have heavy wooden doors with iron reinforcement bands for security, and round metal handles. The panels of the door at the top left hand side are carved, but this feature is not clear on the other doors. Mulberry {tūth} seems to have been the preferred material for doors,<sup>110</sup> although a red wood has been used for two downstairs doors in this khān. Methods of construction included posts and panels<sup>111</sup> or single leaves.<sup>112</sup> Nails, glue and decorative ironwork were used to join the parts,<sup>113</sup> and the wood might be carved or inlaid. The five downstairs doors are rounded, and they

are larger than the five pointed doors on the upper storey. The larger dimensions would facilitate the entry of pack animals and their burdens into the lower storerooms, while the smaller upper chambers admitted the travellers and their personal belongings and more portable valuables.

Ibn Jubayr tells how at a khān at Acre in 580/1184 the merchants deposited their baggages {presumably downstairs}, and "lodged in the upper storey".<sup>114</sup> All the doors in the illustration appear to have two leaves, as indicated by two large rings or handles on either side. This is more obvious in the illustration in Paris B.N. arabe 3929 which follows.

The khān was part of a commercial hierarchy which was located according to the needs of particular groups of merchants and artisans and, as well as providing lodgings for visiting traders, it was used for the storage of the products of neighbouring workshops.<sup>115</sup> A syndicate of merchants, presided over by the ra'īs al-tujjār, or chief merchant, was formed to supervise commercial transactions, arbitrate in disputes, and perhaps also to establish a standard rate for commodities.<sup>116</sup> Ordinary members of a syndicate were called umanā', or trustees, and a muhtāsib or superintendent looked after the day to day running of the market and could punish traders who cheated in weights and measures.<sup>117</sup>

In general, the mercantile community seems to have enjoyed a large measure of autonomy, and higher authority appears only to have intervened in the matter of tax collection. Customs duty is forbidden according to the Shari'a but the jurists circumvented this by including duty in the zakāt,<sup>118</sup> and customs offices seem to



have been prevalent. Muslim merchants paid 2½% tax, non-Muslim merchants 5%, while foreigners had 10% dues levied on their goods. <sup>119</sup> A merchant was supposed to have free passage across a frontier for one year, paying customs dues on only one occasion, but he seems to have had a 10% tax levied on all the cash he carried; this was the theory, but tariffs varied widely. <sup>120</sup>

Commenting on the complicated system of customs at Fārs at an earlier period, al-Muqaddasī said, "Ask not about the multiplicity and oppressiveness of its taxes", <sup>121</sup> while al-Qalqashandī reported that Baṣra, in particular, was notorious for interference and searches in later times. <sup>122</sup> 'Umar's ruling that no merchant's goods should be searched had obviously been long disregarded. <sup>123</sup> In 580/1184, Ibn Jubayr recounted how his party arrived at Acre, where they were accompanied to the customs house. He described this as

"a khān prepared to accommodate the caravan. Before the door are stone benches, spread with carpets, where are the Christian clerks of the Customs with their ebony ink-stands ornamented with gold. All the customs dues go to the Ṣahib al-Dīwān, who holds a contract to farm the customs." <sup>124</sup>

Ordinary travellers with no merchandise were also searched, but "all this was done with civility and respect, and without harshness and unfairness". <sup>125</sup>

Grabar is correct in saying that all the manuscripts without exception show a building of monumental proportions on two storeys, an exterior, and rooms giving on to a balcony, and that the 6th/12th and 7th/13th centuries are the first centuries for which there is

architectural evidence of "superb new caravanserais" from Iran to Syria and Anatolia. <sup>126</sup>

The famous early 8th/14th century Jalā'irid Khān Mirjān in Baghdad was built by the governor of Baghdad, Amīn al-Dīn Mirjān, in 760/1359. <sup>127</sup> This building was a large two-storey rectangle constructed in brick, and the projecting entrance was centrally situated on the north side and was dominated by a pointed arch {iwān}. The very large internal courtyard {sahn} was roofed in and, for this reason, Khan Mirjan was known as a "covered khān". <sup>128</sup> The roof was carried on 8 solid, pointed arches of about 2 metres wide, and was 14 metres high. <sup>129</sup> Angled roof vents provided lighting in every direction, and ventilation. <sup>130</sup>

In all, there were 58 rooms of various sizes <sup>131</sup> and, assuming that al-Wāsiṭī's illustration is fairly typical and that the courtyard is at least square, his khān would have some 40 rooms. Rentals for rooms possibly varied according to size, for the impoverished al-Harith says that he secluded himself in a chamber, "not paying an excess of rent". <sup>132</sup> Perhaps the little room with the fixed air vent on the top storey was classed as superior accommodation and cost more, because it had access to the roof.

Once more, it appears that al-Wāsiṭī has exerted artistic licence by showing the drugged 'wedding guests' downstairs in the courtyard, for the text clearly says that the merchants entered Abū Zayd's room. <sup>133</sup> One might reasonably expect this scene to take place upstairs; al-Janabī confirms Ibn Jubayr's account, <sup>134</sup> and

indicates that the quarters for people were always set above the animals at courtyard level. <sup>135</sup> Close examination of the miniature shows that the action is 'framed' by the two large spandrels to indicate the courtyard space; al-Wāsiṭī has superimposed the scene enacted in Abū Zayd's {upper} room upon the general features of the khān as viewed from the courtyard. The confirmation may lie in the absence of columns at ground floor level to support the gallery.

A ḥadīth says,

"The most worthy earnings are those of the merchants, who if they are spoken to, do not lie, if they are trusted, do not betray, if they promise, do not fail, if they buy, do not condemn, if they sell, do not extol, if they owe, do not delay, and if they are owed, do not press." <sup>136</sup>

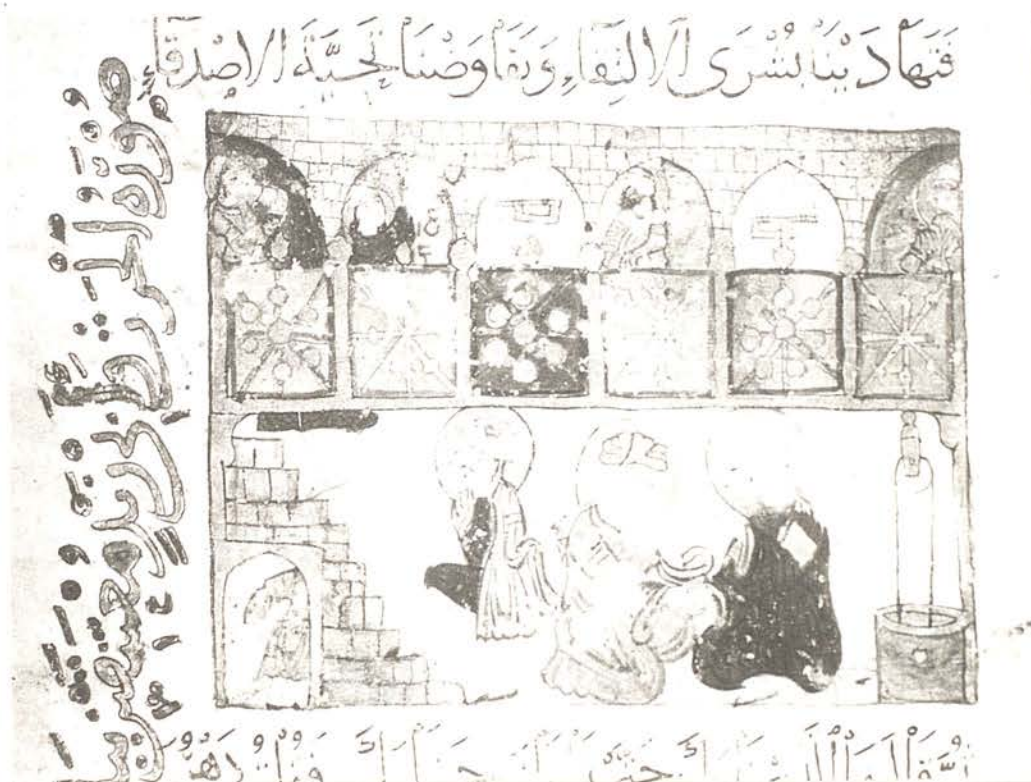
Unfortunately for al-Ḥārith and his companions, their trust on this occasion was sadly misplaced. Our rogue hero plumbs new depths of hypocrisy as he coolly arrays himself "with the garb of sincere friendship", <sup>137</sup> and the artist has provided a very apt illustration of Abū Zayd's perfidy.

Rather surprisingly perhaps, for the artist shows very little architecture in his illustrations, one finds the most fully comprehensive and original view of a khān in Paris B.N. arabe 3929. The line of text above the miniature runs

"we congratulated each other and mutually paid the dues of the welcoming of friends." <sup>138</sup>

and the caption in large thulūth which runs down the left hand side of the folio reads,

"The picture of al-Ḥārith and Abū Zayd greeting each other warmly."



Al-Hārith and Abū Zayd have just met in the courtyard, and they sit beside a well. An urban khān was a lodging house with a central courtyard for the foreign merchants who plied the caravan routes, <sup>137</sup> and there was a well in the courtyard for watering the animals. <sup>139</sup>

Ibn Jubayr, travelling in May and June of 1184, described the gayṣariya or inn for the merchants in Mosul as being



"...like a large khān, and is bolted with iron doors and surrounded by shops and houses one over the other. It is decorated throughout in a splendid manner, and of an architectural elegance that has no like, for I have never in any land seen a gayṣariya to compare with it." <sup>140</sup>

Perhaps this artist's khān was also sited in a business quarter of Wāṣiṭ.

Something of mercantile activity is conveyed here, with people busy in the upper storey. A figure is disappearing up the stairway, while another small person seems to be darting through a doorway at the left foreground. In quite another context, but in connection with the roughly-contemporary Istanbul E.E. 2916 Maqāmāt manuscript, Grabar says that the device of a person partly in and partly out of a room was an important and, at that time, rare device to indicate depth. <sup>141</sup> A similar interest in people going about their business is found in the mid-7th/13th century Pseudo-Galen Kitāb al-Tiryāq <sup>142</sup> and this genre element also occurs on early 7th/13th century metalwork. <sup>143</sup>

Al-Tanūkhī reports that the qādī Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn Sayyār told how a certain benighted traveller had to stay overnight in a deserted khān in a thicket. There was a staircase, and the building "must have had at least two storeys". <sup>144</sup>

Caravanserais opened around nine o'clock in the morning and closed at six o'clock in the evening. <sup>145</sup> This artist alone captures Mazahery's "agitation extraordinaire". <sup>146</sup> Time would be of the essence to a merchant, and his sojourn in the khān fairly brief. The lively people upstairs, who are framed by the archways, remind one of the tavern scenes in the Leningrad S.23 and Paris B.N. arabe 5847 taverns. <sup>147</sup>

At first glance, two of the six upper rooms seem to show scales in front of their pointed doors; closer inspection, however, indicates that



these are extremely large metal bolts which engaged with two rings, and these may well be the so-called "Greek" locks which al-Muqaddasī had seen.<sup>148</sup> If this is so, then the doors must have had two leaves, which opened inwards. It is not possible from the reproduction to say if these are "iron" doors like those of the Mosul khān which Ibn Jubayr described. These leaves each seem to have four panels, and they are set in pointed archways. It has been noted that there is very little architecture in Paris B.N. 3929, and the artist's lack of knowledge of architectural techniques is evident here. In the absence of reinforcement and a keystone, it is unlikely that such stout doors could have been supported in these archways, unless the hinges were affixed with mortar.

Large doors obviously need substantial fittings, and in one of Badī' al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī's earlier Maqāmāt there is a boastful merchant who tells a guest that his door handle had been purchased from a famous shop; it contained six pounds of copper and cost three dīnārs in Mu'izz al-Dawla's currency.<sup>149</sup> The fittings in the khān would be concerned with security, and here they are likely to be iron, although no detail is discernible. Iron nails with ornamental heads were used, both for utility and decoration, and contemporary Baghdadi examples appear on the door of Jāmi' al-'Amādiya.<sup>150</sup> They apparently reinforce a joint and take the form of an eight-petalled rosette, a motif which was commonly found on applied decoration at that time.<sup>151</sup> Decorative nails formed a geometrical motif on a door which was commissioned by Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu' in 646/1246.<sup>152</sup>

There is a very unusual and decorative six-panelled stucco-fronted gallery on the first floor, and this represents a departure from the

usual wooden railings of various design found throughout the Maqāmāt manuscripts. These panels appear to have been moulded, as there is a repetition of two patterns. Moulding would obviously allow the use of stucco on more utilitarian buildings due to cheapness of construction. It is unlikely that the panels of this balustrade were carved from wet plaster, for they lack crispness and the light and dark contrast of finely carved stuccowork. Owing to its relative delicacy and the vagaries of the weather, stucco work was usually confined to interior surfaces,<sup>153</sup> and these panels may be purely decorative. One might expect to find decorative stuccowork in the interior courtyard of a well-to-do home, and this may be another argument for the khān resembling the typical kind of house.

The architecture is employed here as a 'frame', and Ward has pointed out that this is one of several similarities which this manuscript shares with al-Jazarī's Ahmet III 3472, Al-jamī' bayn al-'ilm wa al-'amal al-nāfi' f'il-sina'āt al-ḥiyāl in Istanbul dated 602/1206.<sup>154</sup> In order to use the building as a framing device, it has been necessary to omit the downstairs rooms and the means of support for the gallery. If we assume that this building also is at least square, there must have been some 48 rooms at the minimum. It is an exciting and innovative illustration and the artist seems to have been inspired by an actual building. This type of urban khān was relatively secure within a city's own defensive system, such as Baghdad's massive walls and huge gates.<sup>155</sup>

While khāns in a medium-sized town could number dozens, cities such as Baghdad or Old Cairo could boast of hundreds of these establishments.<sup>156</sup> We know from Ibn Taghribirdī's Chronicles of Egypt

that the Masrur caravanserai was situated in the north eastern quarter of Cairo, <sup>157</sup> and he also mentioned the Rice Caravanserai, funduq al-aruzz, as well as the Tanbadhī Caravanserai on the Nile Shore. <sup>158</sup> The term gayṣariya for khān was apparently confined to Arab countries earlier subject to the Byzantines, for example Egypt, Syria and Morocco. <sup>159</sup> Ibn Jubayr suggests that gayṣariya might indicate a market building specially licensed by Caesar in return for a settled fee, <sup>160</sup> He described the gayṣariya in Aleppo as

"a walled-in garden in its freshness and beauty, flanked, as it is, by the venerated mosque. He who sits in it yearns for no other sight even were it paradisaical." <sup>161</sup>

The importance of the khān to the mercantile class, who may have been patrons as well as readers of these manuscripts, may be gauged by the fact that most of the manuscripts illustrate such a building. Both of these illustrations have large and fairly imposing buildings, with dimensions and features which appear on contemporary architecture, and they seem to represent a typical khān of the day in function and form.

Finally, we turn now to the slave market.



{c} The Slave Market

Maqāma 34 relates how al-Ḥārith, following the death of his personal slave, sought to purchase a replacement from the slave market {sūq al-raqīq} in the Yemeni town of Zabīd. The illustration in Paris B. N. 3929 {one of four in this manuscript for the whole story} occurs at the beginning of the tale, where al-Ḥārith tells how he had owned a slave since he was a youth and had trained him,

" ... until he had perfected his right conduct, and he was fully familiar with my ways, and knew how to draw forth my goodwill, so as not to over-step my intentions, nor to be remiss in {carrying out} my wishes. Therefore needs his good services had won him my heart, and I singled him out {as my companion} in my stay and travel. But pernicious fate made away with him when we had reached Zabid, and when 'the sole of his foot was turned up', and his voice had waxed still. " 162

The miniature is reproduced overleaf.



Large thuluth script announces that this is "A picture of the dead slave."

Al-Ḥārith sits disconsolately beside the body, with his sleeve



lifted up to his face. He wears the standard Arab robes, but he has tied his turban in Bedouin fashion, under his chin, as we have seen elsewhere in this manuscript. <sup>163</sup> This is in order, and again literal. One assumes that the artist read the text, for it tells how al-Ḥārith "crossed the deserts as far as Zabīd". <sup>164</sup> Al-Ḥārith's grief is patently heartfelt, even one year after the slave's death, and it is a demonstration of the strong bond which could exist between slave and master. Ibn Khallikān reports that al-Tha'ālibī's Kitāb al-Ghilmān quoted Abū Ishāq's verses on his slave,

"Your face is so {handsome} that my hand seems to have sketched its outline, but your words {are false} and have fatigued my hopes."

However, he continued,

"Were you not mine I should purchase you with all my wealth! Did I not possess you, I should give my life to obtain you." <sup>165</sup>

In the middle of the 4th/10th century a Turkish slave-boy of Bakhtiyār was taken prisoner at the battle of Ahwāz. Al-Miskawayh reported,

"Towards this lad, whose name was Baitakin, he had not previously displayed any attachment or affection; but now he went mad over his loss, and could bear with fortitude all other losses save this." <sup>166</sup>

Al-Ḥārith's slave lies with his head on a pointed bolster, and he is covered with a light shroud; he seems to be on some type of stretcher or carved wooden bier, and this illustration may be based on a formal portrait. He is fair-skinned and light-haired, like some Greek statue, and he wears a headband. We know that he was in "the full vigour of life", {ashudd} <sup>167</sup> which the Arabs reckon to be from fifteen to forty years of age. <sup>168</sup> Ibn Baṭṭūta recorded in 1333 how he visited the Sultan of Bīrgī at his residence, where

"we found about twenty of his servants of striking beautiful appearance and dressed in silk garments. Their hair was parted and hanging down, and their colour was a radiant white tinged with red. 'Who', I asked the jurist, 'are these beautiful forms?' 'These', he replied, 'are Greek pages'." 169

This account recalls in form and content the reaction of the women to Yūsuf in Sūra 12. 170

During the first half of the 5th/11th century the Christian doctor Ibn Butlan wrote a useful guide to the art of making a sound purchase of a slave, and he listed the superior qualities of slaves from various regions. 171 At sūq al-raḡīq slaves were classified according to religion, race and attainments. 172 For example, the white slaves were mainly Armenians, Berbers and Greeks, while Abyssinians were very good cooks and could be cheaply acquired. 173 Tāhir ibn 'Abdallah ibn Tāhir instructed his agents,

"If you ever come across a Tukharistān draught horse, a Bardha'a mule, an Egyptian ass or a Samargand slave, then buy it immediately, and don't bother referring back to me for a decision." 174

Al-Hārith's slave is a "white slave".

The importance of slaves in commerce can be inferred from the remarks of one Ibn Riḍwān ibn 'Aqīl, who said that he employed the most agile of strong, cunning youths for hoarding and selling. 175 A slave could rise to a position of prominence. For example, the greatest of the Eastern Muslim geographers, Yāqūt, was of Greek parentage and he was bought in Baghdād by a merchant from Ḥamā. 176 He was given a good education and then employed as a travelling clerk with his master before being manumitted. 177 This training accords well with the counsel given in the Qabūs-nāma regarding employees, which runs,

"Keep a complete tally of all your profit and loss, and have all



written down in your own hand to protect yourself from oversight and error. Furthermore, always keep a reckoning with your slaves and those about you." <sup>178</sup>

Le Strange mentions a square called Rahba Suwayd, named after the fief of a freed slave of al-Manṣūr. <sup>179</sup> A 5th/11th-century papyrus document attests to manumission. It provides a full description and the name of the slave, expresses the master's thanks for his services, and it is signed and witnessed. <sup>180</sup>

In common with most of the illustrations in the Paris B.N. 3929, there are no architectural elements or a base line {other than that formed by the bier}. However, these are positive points. Al-Ḥārith's lightly draped robe and the soft light swirling shroud are devoid of patterns which might detract from the emotion of the scene, and these factors all emphasise the poignancy of the cutting down of a young man in his prime and al-Ḥārith's resultant feelings of desolation, which seem genuine.

Unfortunately, not all masters treated their slaves well, and some slaves absconded. Another 5th/11th-century legal document advises,

"If a slave runs away and a man restores him to his master from a distance of three days journey or more, the finder can claim a reward of forty dirhams from the owner." <sup>181</sup>

The reward varied according to distance from the master's home, <sup>182</sup> and it was also, presumably, based on the original purchase price. This document also says that "If a runaway slave has been given as pledge for a debt, the reward is due from the pledge holder." <sup>183</sup>

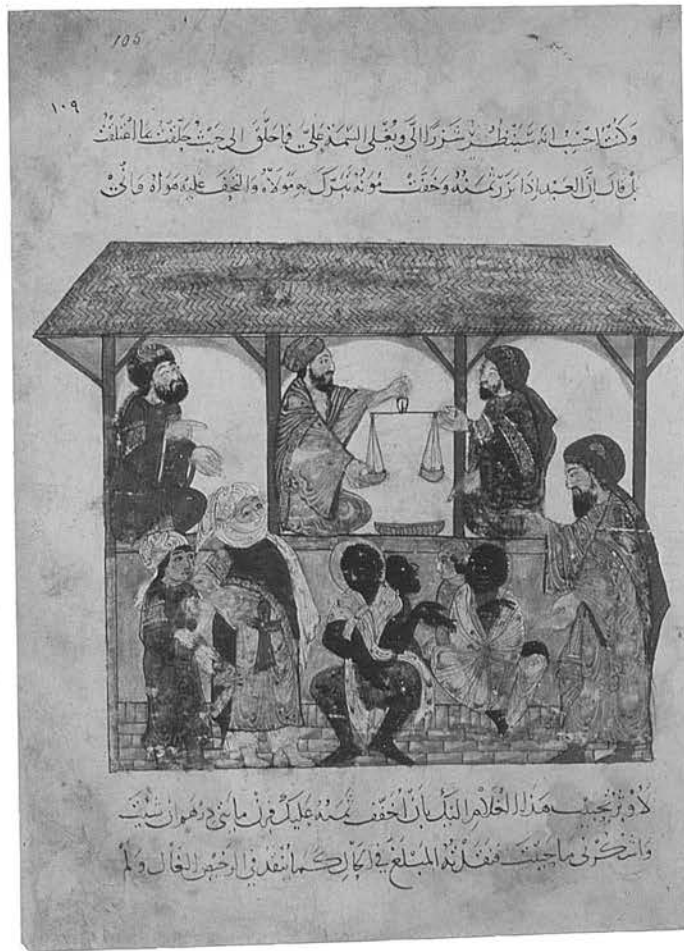
This miniature is the only instance where an artist was moved to portray al-Ḥārith's **previous** slave, for whom he sought a replacement; the other artists concentrate on the bargaining over

'Yūsuf' and al-Ḥārith seeking redress in the court. It is yet another occasion in Paris B.N. 3929 where great empathy with the characters is displayed, and this painter's portrait of Abū Zayd and al-Ḥārith embracing "with the clinging of the lām to the alīf" <sup>184</sup> in Maqāma 31 was one of the most moving in the whole of the Maqāmat cycle. There may be an implication here that this artist read the text carefully, for he invariably gives a very literal, visual rendering, which here sums up well a poet's sentiments in the Siyāsat-nāma,

"One obedient slave is better  
than three hundred sons;  
for the latter desire their father's death,  
the former his master's glory." <sup>185</sup>

Al-Wāsiṭī's illustration is in the correct place in the tale, and it is framed by two lines of text above and two lines below which read ...,

"Now I thought he would look askance at me and demand from me a high sum, but he did not soar whither I had soared, nor held he on to that to which I held on, nay, on the contrary he said, 'Here is the boy! If the price is low, and his keep but slight, his master thinks himself blessed in him and loves him all the better for it, and I wish above all to make thee fond of the lad by lightening to thee the price for him; so weigh out two hundred dirhams if thou wilt, and be thankful to me as long as thou livest'. So I paid him the amount at once, as the lawful price is paid in a cheap bargain, {and it occurred not to my mind, that everyone who sells cheap, makes one pay dear.}" <sup>186</sup>



This slave market is a simply-framed building of two storeys of strut and post construction, with what may be a tiled roof. It is the most basic, open shed-type of building to be seen in any market-place, even today. It may represent a permanent structure situated in one of the large markets held only on one day of the



week. Ya'qūbī mentioned a Sāmarrān slave-market in the 3rd/9th century which consisted of a quadrangle intersected by alleyways, <sup>187</sup> and perhaps this stall was one of many. It was considered a degradation for a good class of slave to be sold publicly, <sup>188</sup> so one wonders at al-Ḥārith's naivety in the market place. Ibn Taghribirdī's Chronicles reveal that in the 8th/14th and 9th/15th centuries there had been a slave market on the site of the smaller structure of the Masrūr caravanserai in Cairo. <sup>189</sup> Al-Wāsiṭī's sūq seems to reflect a contemporary scene.

Al-Ḥārith is the figure at the right hand foreground, while the man in the face veil is Abū Zayd; they are both in Arab clothes. The boy is of straight build and good appearance. During his farewell pilgrimage the Prophet preached a sermon containing the following injunction,

"And your slaves! see that ye feed them with such food as ye eat yourselves, and clothe them with the like clothing as ye wear yourselves ..." <sup>190</sup>

Abū Zayd dressed the boy in Arab clothes and a turban, and al-Ḥārith was so captivated by the lad that a quotation from the Qur'ān immediately sprang to mind, "This is not a young man, but forsooth an honoured angel." <sup>191</sup> Al-Ḥārith also failed to note the significance of the boy's turban, for Prophetic tradition has it that "the difference between a Muslim and an infidel is the wearing of a turban on the cap", <sup>192</sup> so the youth must be a Muslim. <sup>193</sup> Unfortunately, al-Ḥārith was so keen to strike a speedy bargain that he disregarded the context of this verse, the story of Yūsuf {Joseph}, who was, of course, a free man.

On this occasion and on his previous form al-Ḥārith is shown

not merely to be naive, but ridiculously so. In mitigation, one should point out that throughout the fifty tales al-Ḥārith must be taken in by Abū Zayd, otherwise there would be no dénouement and no moral; this fact would become apparent and acceptable to the enlightened reader, who savoured the literary devices.<sup>194</sup> Here we see one point of the argument of some of al-Ḥarīrī's critics, who say that he sacrificed content to form.<sup>195</sup>

Although there are injunctions in the Ḥadīth concerning both the keeping of male Muslims in captivity and showing favouritism to Muslim slaves,<sup>196</sup> strictly speaking, Muslims could not be reduced to slavery, although they could be born into servitude.<sup>197</sup>

In the 5th/11th century Ibn Randaqa al-Turtūshi related how the wazīr Nizām al-Mulk advised Sultan Malikshāh that if a ghulam in military service was a young Turk, he would sell for more than thirty dīnārs.<sup>198</sup> This price seems to accord with that quoted in contemporary Egyptian texts<sup>199</sup> and suggests that this was the going rate throughout the area at that time. An account in the Arabian Nights tends to bear this out, for some fifty dīnārs was paid in Kufa for a woman and her beautiful daughter.<sup>200</sup>

Whims of rulers could doubtless influence prices; al-Nāṣr is reported to have paid five thousand dīnārs for a youth of fifteen years of age of outstanding beauty.<sup>201</sup> Goitein is of the opinion that the keeping of slave girls, as revealed in the pietist literature of the first five centuries of Islam, met with less resistance than any other luxury, and he is in no doubt that this attitude was a factor in the enormous expansion in the slave-trade generally at that time.<sup>202</sup>



The old man in the face veil has extolled the lad's many virtues, and a price is agreed at "two hundred dirhams". <sup>203</sup> Al-Ḥārith had obviously expected to pay much more, for he carried gold and silver coins, "the yellow and the white". <sup>204</sup> Dealers were held in low esteem generally and distrusted, perhaps because they were well-practised in the art of making slaves marketable by increasing their allure and exaggerating their alleged virtues. <sup>205</sup> Perceived defects obviously affected the price paid for a slave, and even Sultan Baybars, who was originally a slave, almost lost a purchaser in the market. Although he was tall and ruddy and had blue eyes, a cataract diminished his value, <sup>206</sup> and his seller achieved a relatively modest price. <sup>207</sup>

Of the three men in the upper register, the one holding the scales is in charge of the money. One wonders if he is some sort of broker in overall superintendence of the market, who might receive a commission from the vendor or purchaser. Al-Wāsiṭī's scales have a calibration ring and a movable pointer just below the carrying ring or handle, but there are no visible means of transporting the balance. This would be important, to protect the accuracy of the mechanism. Neither money nor weights are visible; they may be in the brass scale-pans.

Al-awzān wa'l-maqādir, a special branch of the Sharī'a, is devoted to weights and measures <sup>208</sup> and the importance of weights in a major trading civilisation loomed large. 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Khāzin, al-Bīrūnī and al-Khayyām all wrote treatises on weights and measures. <sup>209</sup> Al-Bīrūnī's balance is illustrated in a Khazīnī manuscript <sup>210</sup> and the weights there are clearly seen stored, one

on top of the other in descending order, on a carrying base. This was lifted by a hooked metal rod, and the weights must therefore have had a notch, measuring half their diameter, which slipped around the rod. In the mid-4th/10th century al-Miskawayh described a set of scales which belonged to Abū 'Alī, the Treasurer of al-Mutī', as

"an instrument like a balance, or rather the case for one, made of teak wood, with a beam {?} like that of a balance; but no place for weight or pan, being carved out of the blocks like a reservoir with a cover made to fit it. It contained nothing." <sup>211</sup>

A pair of brass scales with two fairly deep bowls occurs in a Kitāb al-Tiryāq manuscript of the Baghdād School, Paris B.N. arabe 2964, dated 1199. <sup>212</sup> These were used to weigh out the ingredients for the prescription. Sets of scales appear on metalwork in connection with the astrological symbol of Libra. <sup>213</sup>

Abū Zayd set a riddle on the goldsmith's balance in Maqāma 42, part of which runs ...

"One flighty and leaning with one half to one side, but no man of sense will upbraid him for either:  
He is always raised up on high as a just king is rightly exalted for aye in his station.  
Alike are to him both the pebble and nugget, though trust should in no wise be balanced with falsehood." <sup>214</sup>

This balance appears in the Arabic text as al-ṭayyār <sup>215</sup> and it has connotations of a bird; it is a pleasing and apt metaphor. Al-Ghazālī also saw bird-like qualities in a balance, for he said that the merchant's scales

"should be delicate and responsive - like a bird in flight, so that their balance will be absolutely just. The scale cords should be long and the scale balance points {where the scales are attached} of good quality." <sup>216</sup>



A financial transaction was not merely a case of exchanging the requisite number of coins. Fraud was practised by clipping genuine currency and making up its weight with quicksilver or antimony, <sup>217</sup> and it may follow that counterfeit coins had a definite, if modest value.

It goes without saying that the weights could also be open to manipulation, hence the need for regulation. An early example of lack of public confidence in the economy was reported by Rashīd al-Dīn in his Jamīʿ al-Tawārīkh. <sup>218</sup> The late 7th/13th-century Persian ruler, Gaykhatu, was inspired by Chinese paper money {chao} and he issued a decree that anyone refusing his currency would be executed. <sup>219</sup> However, he was shortly forced to rescind this, because the markets closed down and the people revolted. <sup>220</sup>

Slave-dealing was subject to official regulation. A 4th/10th-century edict in Baghdād enjoined the instant removal of all disreputable purchasers from sūq al-raḡīq, <sup>221</sup> and we know that among the duties of the muhtasib or chief of municipal police was superintendence of the slave market. <sup>222</sup> Perhaps the vendors were licensed brokers, who provided the purchasers with a receipt.

A purchase deed for a slave dated 784/1382 was discovered in the Dome of the Rock precincts, although it has no obvious connection with Jerusalem. <sup>223</sup> This bears an impressive red seal tamgha of a type which is more usually associated with Mongol documents, and it is written and endorsed in a Persian style of



handwriting. <sup>224</sup> One would expect to find full details of the slave's place and date of birth, his religion, and the dates and purchase prices of named previous owners. Such a document would provide proof of purchase; it would also serve as a reference for the slave, so it would be advantageous to both master and servant, as a provenance.

Three slaves in the lower right foreground are dark-skinned, and appear to be African. They wear a loose robe, which the text later in the tale describes as mi'rad or the garment in which a slave was displayed. <sup>225</sup> The Indian slaves outside the palace of the wālī in Maqāma 39 <sup>226</sup> in this manuscript wear similar garments, and a small Arab boy wearing a turban is also part of this slave market group. Al-Wāsiṭī seems to have portrayed a typical transaction in the sūq.

The slave scene illustration in Leningrad S.23 shows an original building on two levels. Al-Ḥārith is being importuned by an eloquent-tongued slave dealer, and he relates ..

"{When lo! there accosted me} a man who had the face-veil drawn over his nostrils, and who held a boy by his forearm, saying: 'Who buys from me a lad who proves deft at his work, and is in make and manners surprisingly fair? Equal to any task thou may lay upon him, who speeds thee when he speaks, and when spoken to attends, Who if thou stumble says to thee "Rise to thy feet", and if thou bid him "Enter the fire", he enters it, Who when thou wilt, if but a day, associates thee, and is contented but with a scrap, if such thy wish.'" <sup>227</sup>

رجل قد احتمل الياء وقبض على زبد غلام وقال  
 استمعي يا غلام ما سمعت في خلقه وخلقته قد سرعا  
 كما زنت به مضطعا يشك ان قال وان قلت وعما  
 ان تصيد عمر ويقل افا وان تسمه السع في النار عا



وان تصاحبه ولو يوم ماعا وان تشقه بظلف. قنع

The artist includes many of the elements of his more general domestic architecture, such as small roof tiles laid in a chevron pattern, long gables, beams, three roof lights, cusped and rounded arches, and a brick paved floor laid in vertical bonding. His elaboration of this setting and the characters into "the slave-

sellers in the market of Zabīd" <sup>228</sup> has been effected by the addition of the two men at the top weighing out coins, to indicate a business transaction, and of the slaves seated on the platform at the right foreground. If this scene is in fact the open-air market stall in sūq al-raḡīq, then the rooflights seem to serve no purpose, and merely add interest to a plain surface.

The tripartite setting and chevron tiles call to mind al-Wāsiṭī's illustration on f.105. However, this illustration is more successful in suggesting bustle and three-dimensional space. This is achieved by the dormer windows and the variation of the central archway, which breaks up the upper storey. Further, the voluble hand gestures and body language link the characters on both levels, whereas al-Wāsiṭī's composition gives the impression of a staged set-piece, where separate incidents take place in isolation.

It may be that, despite the text, the Leningrad S.23 artist chose to illustrate a scene within a slave-merchant's house; we know that better-class slaves could be sold in private houses or through well-known dealers. <sup>229</sup> These houses contained lower and upper rooms, with stalls for the slaves. <sup>230</sup> Le Strange mentions a Slave's House {dār al-raḡīq}, <sup>231</sup> which in al-Mansūr's time was used as a barracks for his domestic slaves. <sup>232</sup>

Al-Ya'qūbī notes that where the pages of the chamberlain in Baghdād lodged was close to the Slave's House and that, in time, the surrounding suburb also took the name dār al-raḡīq. <sup>233</sup> Al-Baghdādī, writing in the 5th/11th century, confirmed this, <sup>234</sup> and he also mentioned a "Slave's Quarter", {qatī'at al-raḡīq} which formed part of the fief of Umm Ja'far. <sup>235</sup> In the same period Ibn 'Aqīl noted

that Dār al-raḡīq was a commodious quarter which contained "many wonderful buildings". 236

It is therefore quite plausible that the artist used as his model a large, high-profile, crowded city building, where light and ventilation would be important, and the squarish windows in the illustration provide these. The roof elevation of the Khān Mirjān in Baghdād, which was constructed in 760/1359, was punctuated by a series of dormer windows; 237 these, however, were rounded and pointed.

Slaves were a highly visible feature of the urban scene, and the miniatures have demonstrated at a personal level the bond between slave and master. Unfortunately, a slave was but a mere commodity {sil'a min al-sila'} among many. 238

The various categories of illustrations which have been chosen to demonstrate the importance of trade in Islamic lands have reflected well the pivotal role of the merchant in the mediaeval Muslim world.

\*\*\*\*\*

## CHAPTER 5

### ASPECTS OF URBAN LIFE

#### The City

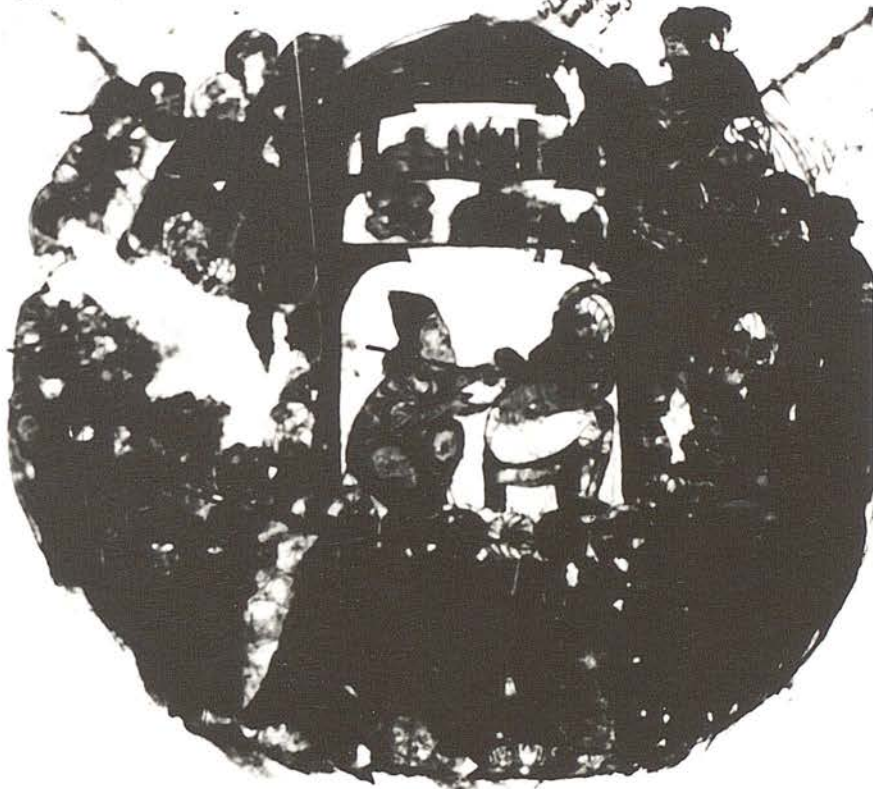
##### {a} The Cupper

Maqāma 47 finds al-Ḥārith in Ḥajr al-Yamāma, a city in the Hijāz to the east of Mecca. Al-Ḥārith stated that he "needed a cupping" <sup>1</sup> and that his "blood was heated", <sup>2</sup> although he gave no indication of the cause of this malady. Perhaps cupping was generally regarded as therapeutic and he would, of course, be tired and weary in his travels. It seems that cuppers would carry out treatment in private homes <sup>3</sup> and, as al-Ḥārith was loath to visit the cupper's establishment, he sent his slave out to fetch the practitioner to his lodgings. However, the cupper was unable to call, so al-Ḥārith reluctantly went to the market-place. Three rather similar illustrations appear in Leningrad S.23, and the text on page 328 reads ...

"I see that thou hast stretched forth thy head before thou bringest forth thy scrap and hast offered me thy nape without saying 'This is for thee', but I am not one of those ... {who sell ready goods for owed money} ..." <sup>4</sup>



ألا قد أرتد ركب من شمر زقطنك، ولسي قد ألدوم بقدر الك ولست  
من مع بقاديس ولا يطب أثر بعد عين فالت رصحت، وبع حجت في



One must question the absence of women in the manuscripts, where they appear only as accessories to Abū Zayd and in response to the dictates of the text. At any rate, they evidently were not occupied in retail trade, for al-Muqaddasī reports what appears to be an exception in Egypt, where Herodotus noted women carrying on retail business.<sup>5</sup>

This is an extraordinarily vibrant image enhanced by the circular composition. The device has the effect of isolating the cupper's booth from the myriad of similar 'hole in the wall' types of shops which in reality surrounded it in the sūq, and of emphasising the drama being enacted; it creates a spectacle. There is no indication of the light source in the shop, but the plain background highlights the protagonists and the implements of the trade.

The artist's elliptical base-line, which he employs elsewhere,<sup>6</sup> allows the manipulation and building up of figures to much better effect than in al-Wāsiṭī's composition of this scene on a horizontal ground-line. It also has the effect of raising the more distant figures to slightly above eye-level.

The patient's large expanse of nude lower body and his derisory posture mirror the ribald conversation indicated by the text;<sup>7</sup> these factors may account for al-Ḥārith's recounting how he "loathed to go to a cupper's place"<sup>8</sup> and confirm that this 'cupper' was a low-grade physician who had set up shop in the sūq.

Nude or semi-nude people were depicted in medical manuscripts of the period, but with an air of decorum and passivity, so that the contrast with our 'patient' is immediately apparent.<sup>9</sup> It is

arguable that the lack of a female presence in the sūq encouraged a lively and raucous element among the populace at large.

What seem to be washing lines hanging at either side of the shop are perhaps poles, with clean bandages and dressings put out to dry. Al-Ṭanūkhī relates that Ibn al-Dukaynī was notorious in Baghdad for amusing himself in "unsurpassed style", and

"... if he felt the results of intoxication in the morning he would call for Dābiqī fabrics and have bandages for bleeding torn off them by hand, asserting that nothing would stop his headache but the sound of this music." <sup>10</sup>

As well as being functional and acting as an advertisement, these poles are perhaps also pointers to the idea of urban space and humanity beyond the confines of the folio. As such, they are necessary to counterbalance the isolation created by the circular composition of what is in reality one minor scene of many within a bustling metropolitan environment.

Grabar is correct in asserting that the circular composition here sought to give a formal structure to an image which is lacking landscape and architecture, for they are "the traditional conveyors of compositional structure in the manuscript". <sup>11</sup> The device of the elliptical base-line was known in Byzantine painting, and can be seen in the Paris Tetra Gospel B. N. grecque 74 which was written in the late 5th/11th-early 6th/12th centuries in the monastery of Stoudion in Constantinople. <sup>12</sup> It is not clear whether the domed structure behind the shop is part of the shop, or merely a device to lend a sense of balance to the composition.

Mazaheri describes a sūq in Mesopotamia and Iran as a very long covered street approximately 15 metres wide. <sup>13</sup> Its roof featured

multiple domes which were pierced at the centre with a round opening of approximately 1 metre in width to provide light and ventilation.<sup>14</sup> The boutiques were of similar size; they had neither doors nor windows and were open to the street.<sup>15</sup> Shopkeepers made them fast at nightfall by affixing a wooden shutter with rings, through which iron bars were padlocked in two places.<sup>16</sup> The shops were two stairs up, and sometimes they had a mezzanine area which served as an office.<sup>17</sup> Stools were given to customers, and this gesture may have been part of an unhurried ritual in business transactions which is still evident today in the sūq.<sup>18</sup>

The artist has disregarded the caption referring to a youth and the nape of the neck, perhaps to add more force to the image by way of coarseness and amusement. He shows a bearded adult having the cupping glass {miḥjama}<sup>19</sup> applied to the middle of his bare back. This operation or technique was called ḥijama.<sup>20</sup> Only the Istanbul E.E. 2916 painter interpreted correctly the treatment prescribed in the text, for the two "neck veins" {akhdā'ain}<sup>21</sup> are described in the Ṣiḥāḥ as "the two concealed neck veins in the place of the cupping of the neck",<sup>22</sup> which was under the occiput or back of the skull.

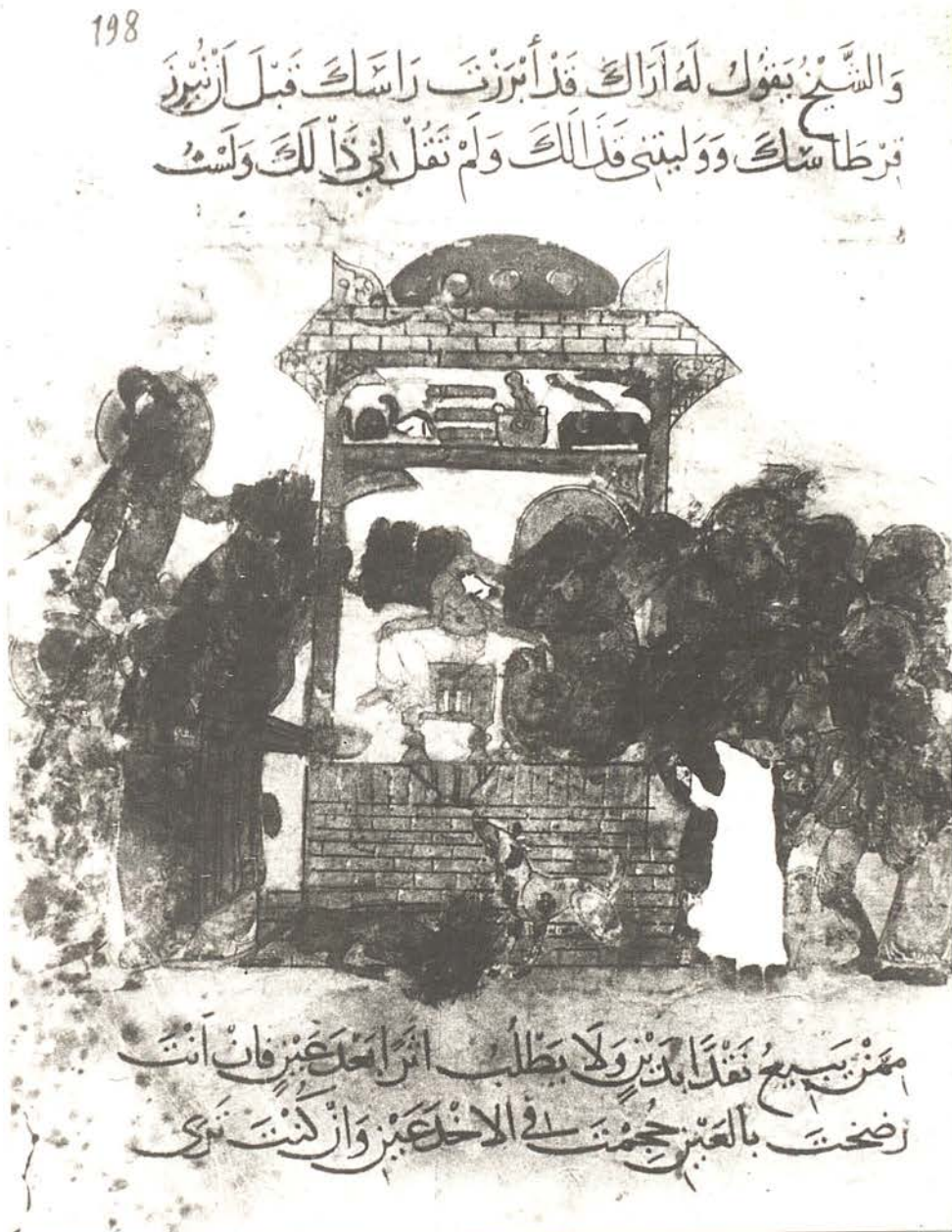
Abū Zayd himself later refers to "the cupping of the hind-part of thy neck".<sup>23</sup> Ibn Riḍwān's hand-written 5th/11th century commentary on Galen's De sectis tells how he had been suffering from severe headaches caused by an "overfilling {plethora} of the blood vessels of the head".<sup>24</sup> Galen appeared to him in a dream and he prescribed "cupping at the occipital protuberance"; this remedied



the condition. <sup>25</sup> Cupping of the neck veins was also considered particularly efficacious in the treatment of melancholy.

The Istanbul E.E. 2916 miniature is reproduced below for comparison only.

Istanbul, Esad Efendi, 2916, f.198:9D1, Mq. 47.





We return to the discussion of the Leningrad S.23 illustration; the implements of the trade are neatly ranged on two shelves, and one sees books, caskets, glass vessels with handles, and possibly candles on the top shelf. Two unidentified objects are to the left of the lower shelf.<sup>26</sup> Although the cups were graded according to disease and the age of the patient,<sup>27</sup> Abū Zayd's vessels are of uniform size. Cups might be of glass, as here; other materials were copper, wood or horn.<sup>28</sup> Only the 8th/14th century British Library 22.114 Maqāmāt illustration shows a horn-shaped implement, where it is affixed to the outside of the cupper's booth and serves as a decorative appendage.<sup>29</sup>

Cupping was performed on wet or dry skin,<sup>30</sup> and the object was to draw blood from deep within the body to superficial tissues.<sup>31</sup> Dry cupping could be practised with or without a flame, and this would explain the candles on the top shelf.<sup>32</sup> A 4th/10th century medical treatise by al-Zahrāwī also showed cupping-cups, and included one illustration of a shelf for a candle.<sup>33</sup> When the glass was heated, the air trapped inside expanded and presumably a vacuum created the "sucking" of the blood to the surface of the skin. This action is summed up in the early 4th/10th century treatise on melancholy by Ishāq ibn 'Umrān, who described the concurrence of certain factors leading to an organ attracting illness "as the cupping glass the blood".<sup>34</sup> The implements and methods of cupping therefore seem to be authentic.

Children might be cupped from upwards of two years of age, but

cupping was discontinued in adults over sixty; <sup>35</sup> it seems to have had no beneficial effect on obese adults. <sup>36</sup> Dry cupping was also believed to retard one's hair turning grey. <sup>37</sup> With wet cupping, the cupper waited until the skin was withdrawn and had become dry before scarification; <sup>38</sup> no lances are shown here. The cupper sometimes had a female assistant who was responsible for one of the specialist functions, and she was known as al-ṣan'īa, <sup>39</sup> which specifically implies skill in the work of the hand or hands. <sup>40</sup> It was recommended that thick skin should be rubbed with an emollient such as camomile. <sup>41</sup>

Cupping was one of the three principal methods of the treatment of illness which were recommended by the Prophet. <sup>42</sup> This branch of early 'Prophetic medicine' {ṭibb al-nabawī or ṭibb al-nabī} has retained its religious character, and it formed the basis into which medical knowledge from other traditions was received. <sup>43</sup>

Discourse 12 of Part IV of 'Alī ibn Rabbān al-Ṭabarī's 3rd/9th century medical treatise Paradise of Wisdom {Firdaws al-ḥikma}, which was the first systematic work on Islamic medicine and made full use of Syrian and Greek sources as well as Sanskrit translations, <sup>44</sup> mentions phlebotomy and cupping. <sup>45</sup> However, Firdaws al-ḥikma, as Browne points out, <sup>46</sup> deals with very little anatomy or surgery. This perhaps indicates an official reliance on non-invasive techniques in the early days of Islamic medicine, <sup>47</sup> possibly both in light of the Prophet's prescriptions and prevailing

medical expertise. Prior to that period, other Arabic medical works had treated surgery more or less as the cinderella of the medical sciences. <sup>48</sup>

It should be pointed out here that the terms 'cupper' and 'phlebotomist' seem to be used synonymously at times; this is borne out by the Maqāmāt text, where Abū Zayd harangued the onlookers in the following terms "If I possessed but food for one day, my hand would never touch the lancet or cupping-cup". <sup>49</sup> The practitioner was known as ṣāhib al-mabādhi' wa'l-mawāsi', that is, "the man with lancets and razors", <sup>50</sup> who was but one of a number of medical or paramedical specialists. <sup>51</sup> In the Arabian Nights, Kāfūr, in the Tale of the Second Eunuch, tells how his master had the bastinado administered to him until he was rendered senseless, when "they brought the barber who docked me and gelded me and cauterised the wound." <sup>52</sup> These accounts confirm Ullmann's comment that surgery "had been left to cuppers and barbers". <sup>53</sup> The scene here suggests a low-grade physician.

Whatever their titles, these paramedical practitioners apparently occupied a somewhat ambiguous social position. <sup>54</sup> The testimony of a cupper <sup>55</sup>, like those of a pigeon-trainer and a bath attendant, <sup>56</sup> as well as tanners, sweepers, weavers and others, was reprehensible {makrūha} <sup>57</sup> to Muslim jurists, for reasons which I have been unable to clarify. However, the extent to which this was interpreted appears to have varied according to local custom and practice {'urf}. So, paradoxically, the cupper was not

necessarily despised, and cupping was also viewed as "a subsection of the highly honoured medical profession". 58

Aspiring doctors attempted to acquire surgical skills by practising bleeding, 59 and cupping also seems to have had the seal of royal approval impressed upon it; the "Feast of the Cupping" or fasd was an important festival at the 'Abbāsid court, when gifts were given and a special feast prepared, and courtiers bearing presents came to congratulate the Caliph and to wish him good health. 60 This possibly took place at an important time of the year, perhaps a birthday, for there are clear indications that astrology was called into play in determining the most appropriate time for cupping; in the case of a ruler, the court physicians and astrologers would possibly consult to ensure the good health and long life of their patron. 61 The Risāla fi-mā' yaḥtaj al-ṭabīb min 'ilm al-falak by Abū Naṣr 'Ādnān ibn Naṣr al-'Aynzarbī, who died in 1153 and who was the personal physician to the Fātimid Caliph al-Ẓāfir bi 'Amr-Allah, dealt with the question of the degree of astrological knowledge which might be required by doctors. 62 He said,

"Bleeding of the neck is unfavourable if the moon is in the sign of Taurus, {that of the back when the moon is in the sign of Leo}" 63

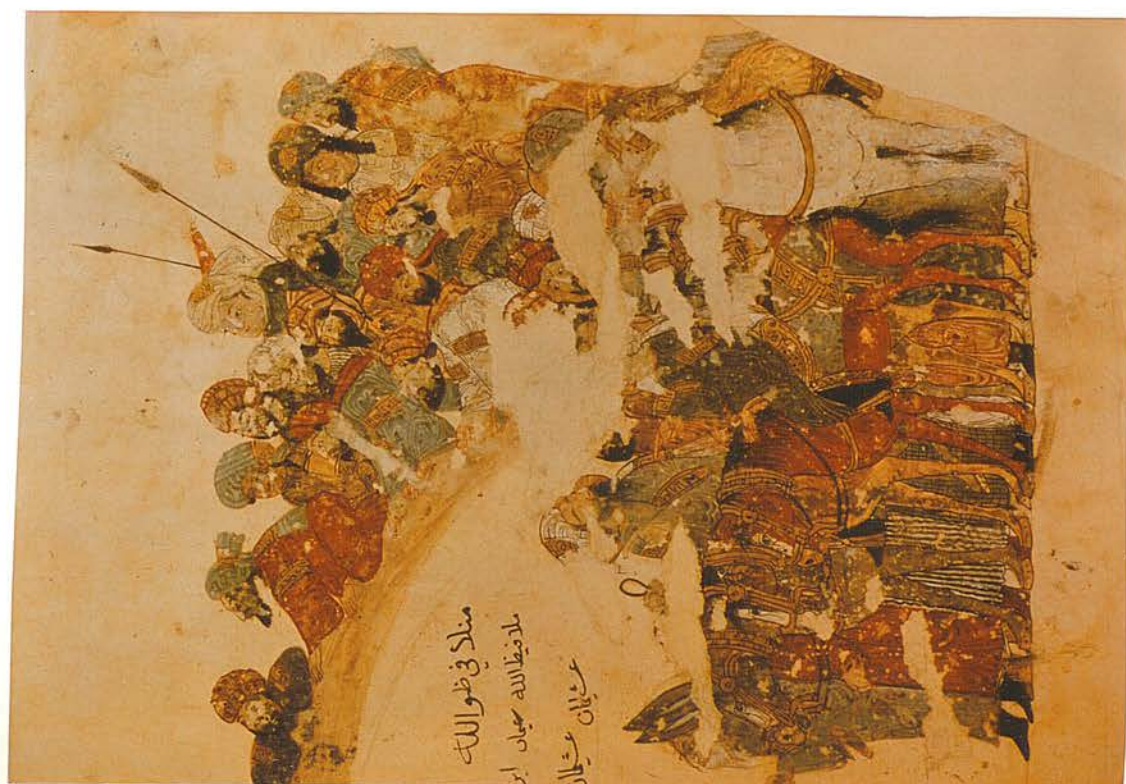
This attention to timing is confirmed elsewhere, where it is suggested that the best time for cupping was between 2-3 p.m. in the

middle of the lunar month. <sup>64</sup>

The reader who has conscientiously worked his way through the literary work should by this 47th tale be well aware that there is an element of play-acting in this dialogue between the 'cupper' and his customer within the circumscribed confines of the shop. This image calls to mind the shadow play {khayal al-zill}, with the action of silhouette figures taking place in a confined space, the ribald element and the accretion of characters crowding around, and the lively figures throughout this Leningrad manuscript are discussed at some length in the analysis of the tavern in Maqāma 12. I have found no illustrations of a cupper in shadow play illustrations, but a bloodletting instrument appears in the earliest al-Jazarī manuscript in Istanbul, Al-jamī' bayn al-'ilm wa al-'amal al-nāfi' fī al-sinā'at al-ḥiyāl, dated 602/1206, <sup>65</sup> and a lawcourt scene in the Paris Kalīla wa Dimna manuscript is entitled "The cupper {al-muzayyin} and his wife before the judge". <sup>66</sup>

We might turn now to al-Wāsiṭī's rendering of the same scene. It is a double-page spread and is reproduced overleaf.





f. 155v: 908



f. 156: 909

Al-Wāsiṭī's shop is identical to those in the other manuscripts, and it is set into a semi-circular rocky hill. This is a fuller expansion of the compositional device which he introduced on f.95 in Maqāma 31, where Abū Zayd preaches to the other pilgrims.<sup>67</sup> Al-Wāsiṭī is also successful in conveying the idea of a throng, which is much more motley; there is a variety of costume, and the facial types reflect the position of Baghdād as a thriving international metropolis.

Concerning the costumes, it is arguable that dark elaborate fabrics provide the necessary foil to the plain background. However, it should not be forgotten that though such finery was costly some, at least, of those in the crowd would be merchants who had amassed capital. They would be secure in society and able to afford to wear precious clothing; this seems to have been a most common indulgence since the earliest days of Islam.<sup>68</sup> Al-Shaybānī's treatise on economic ethics, Kitāb al-Kasb,<sup>69</sup> in the second half of the 2nd/8th century attributes to the Prophet the saying,

"When Allāh gives riches to a man, he wants it to be seen on him."<sup>70</sup>

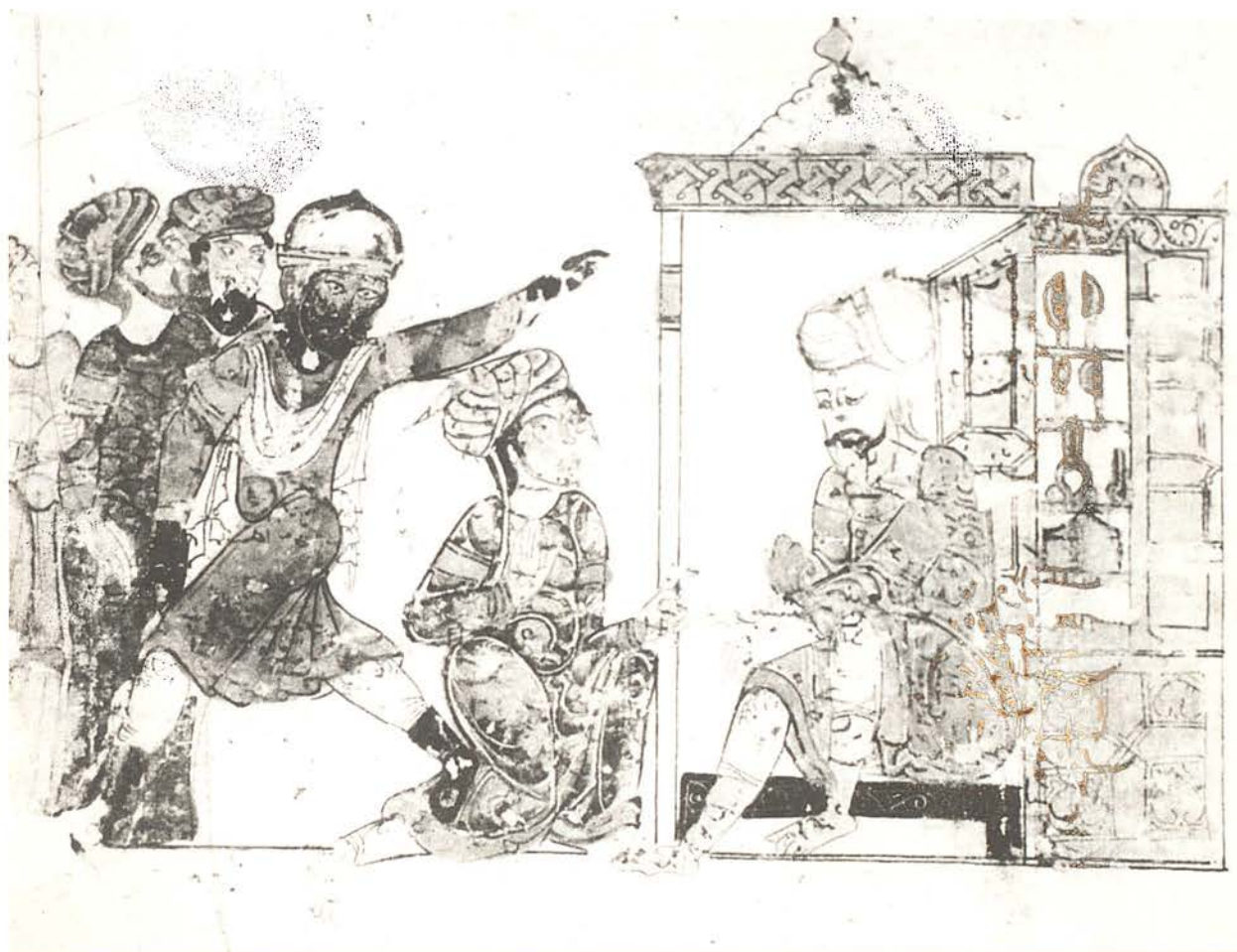
One must also bear in mind that the painter was possibly mindful of his own audience who admired the literary work for personal reasons, in other words, a solid middle class readership who were flattered to see themselves mirrored in the tales.

The Paris B.N. 6094 also shows the cupper in the market place before a crowd of people. No text appears in the reproduction of the illustration, so it is impossible to say if it appears in the



correct place in the tale, or whether the place of the cupping, or the bleeding of the neck-veins is indicated.

Paris, B.N. arabe 6094, f.174:9C6, Mq. 47.



Abū Zayd here most clearly fits into the description of "the man with lances and razors" {sāhib al-mabādhī' wa'l-mawāsī}, for no cups are shown.<sup>71</sup> The shop is orderly, with lances, tongs to hold a hot cupping glass, and a casket neatly set out on shelves. Al-

Ḥārith's request for a shaykh "who cupped skilfully" <sup>72</sup> sounds reasonable. Usāma, writing in the period of the Crusades, describes how he had witnessed "manifestations of men's weakness of soul and faintness of heart, which I did not think possible among women" <sup>73</sup> in connection with bloodletting. <sup>74</sup>

Abū Zayd as cupper poses fairly languidly, with no sign of the tension of the text between him and his customer; this is necessarily precluded by framing Abū Zayd in the doorway and setting him apart from his son. His bare foot projects from the shop front and creates an illusion of depth, and unshod feet are common in Syrian manuscripts. A further development of pictorial space is the door standing ajar behind Abū Zayd, and this feature is unusual in this manuscript. Buchtal considers that while Abū Zayd is not shown seated in the oriental manner, the compositional scheme nevertheless is derived from Byzantine painting. <sup>75</sup> The cupper sits on a flat platform or stool, which may be an elaboration of the step up from street level.

The artificiality of the composition is further emphasised by a strange character with contorted arms and legs. <sup>76</sup> Curiously, he is the only person with footwear, and he is wearing a type of helmet; these features seem to indicate a uniform, and a straight borrowing from elsewhere. Grabar is correct in saying that this gesticulating character results from "some iconographic confusion", <sup>77</sup> for we know from the text that the "customer" is Abū Zayd's son, who should be the beardless youth seated near the shop. A Christian prototype may lie behind this figure, and one should bear in mind the Syrian provenance of B.N. arabe 6094. One might

compare this character with the artist's dark-skinned ghulām who rushed in with a dish of food on f.16 in Maqāma 5. <sup>78</sup> There is something sinuous and feminine about the short robes of the youths.

Below the rows of instruments there is a patterned box-like structure. If this barber also performs cupping, it is possible that this is a tiled stove of the type found, for example, in the Istanbul Disclosure of the Secrets {Kashf al-Asrār}, which was probably executed in Syria in the middle of the 8th/14th century. <sup>79</sup> Fire was an essential element in alchemy, and in the preparation of medications; and even if Abū Zayd on this occasion did not use heated cupping glasses, winters in Syria are severe and a stove is not out of place.

As in the other illustrations, this cupper's booth is shown in isolation from its surroundings, but it is more elaborate than other 'buildings' in general in the manuscript. It is in two sections; the wider, main area is capped with a muqarnas dome, which is used to decorative effect. The shop interior, housing the shelving, has a small pointed dome.

It is pertinent to quote a mediaeval description of a Syrian city. Ibn Jubayr described Aleppo as

"... a town of rare beauty, with large markets arranged in long adjacent rows so that you pass from a row of shops of one craft into that of another until you have gone through all the urban industries. These markets are all roofed with wood, so that their occupants enjoy an ample shade, and all hold the gaze from their beauty, and halt in wonder those who are hurrying by." <sup>80</sup>

The urban mercantile context has been popularly treated in these four illustrations, as in all the other Maqāmāt manuscripts, as a 'hole in the wall' type of shop. They show a single, separate



building, similar to that in the Paris Kalīla wa Dimna, B. N. arabe 3465 manuscript,<sup>81</sup> where two thieves are seen making off with bales of merchandise. That shop has a very similar type of central dome to that in our illustration, flanked by small domes, and it is entered through a cusped archway. Alone of these manuscripts, the Leningrad S.23 suggests a busy environment beyond the confines of the folio, and one might compare the built-up sūq in the Istanbul Hazine 841 Vargha va Gulshah, which depicts a more realistic market-place of several shops in a row.

Ya'qūbī and Ibn Hawkal<sup>82</sup> say that the planning of markets at the founding of Baghdād, and later Sāmarrā, received great attention and that each trade or craft occupied its separate market or lane, {darb}.<sup>83</sup> For instance, we know from Ya'qūbī that the great market in western Baghdād, al-Karkh, was two farsakh long, by one farsakh wide, {a farsakh was three miles}<sup>84</sup> and it was divided into several blocks of different classes of commodities.<sup>85</sup> Ibn 'Aqīl's descriptive account of 5th/11th century Baghdād confirms this, and he said that

"the term sūq, market, consisted not only of shops, but also of dwellings."<sup>86</sup>

He went on to say that in the market places of the Karkh and Bāb al-Ṭāq,

"the perfumers did not mix with the merchants of greasy and other offensive odours; nor did the merchants of new articles mix with those of used articles."<sup>87</sup>

It is likely then that this cupper carried on his trade in an area shared with other para-medical practitioners, such as apothecaries.

Finally, one might refer briefly to the text, where there is a

reference to the cost of a cupping session, and to an Arabic proverb. Al-Hārith took pity on the berated cupper and gave him two dirhams, which presumably covered the cost of the youth's treatment.<sup>88</sup> The impudent 'customer' said that the cupper was "more bereft of customers than the cupper of Sābāt".<sup>89</sup> This was a proverbially foolish cupper who, to encourage customers, offered to cup some soldiers for one dāniq, which was a fairly small sum. Smaller coinage was graded on a sexagesimal system, where 6 dāniq equalled 1 dirham; it went down as far as 'barleycorns'.<sup>90</sup> At the beginning of the 4th/10th century there were 14 dirhams to the dīnār. It is difficult to be precise concerning currency, as rulers were not averse to tampering with the gold and silver content.<sup>91</sup>

To appear busy, the cupper of Sābāt bled his own mother and so weakened her that she died.<sup>92</sup> Only the London B.L. or. 1200 picked this point up, and the dead mother and her son on f.165v there add a touch of amusement to an otherwise predictable manuscript.<sup>93</sup> This illustration seems to have been missed by others; without an understanding of the text, it would appear to be an irrelevance, although it would have been understood by the contemporary reader.

Examination of these miniatures of the cupper's booth has revealed a wealth of medical and para-medical information, and the importance of the cupper and his craft have been demonstrated. As there is such uniformity in the depiction of the instruments, the application of cups and the cupper's booth or shop, one must assume that they represent a typical and easily recognisable scene in the mediaeval middle-eastern market place. It does seem from the

illustrations and the text that at the popular, street-level, the cupper who was not a physician was still performing in the century when al-Ḥarīrī wrote, and in the 7th/13th century, when these illustrations appeared.

#### {b} The Library

Although the second tale is called the Maqāma of Hulwān, which is a town in 'Irāq, the text makes it clear that the library is in Basra, for al-Ḥarīth says ...

"But when I had returned from abroad to my native town, I happened to be in its public library, the haunt of the literary, and the rendezvous of all, whether residents or travellers, when there came in a man in rags, with a short thick beard." <sup>94</sup>

This unprepossessing stranger astounded the gathering by "the stores of his mind" <sup>95</sup> in his commentary upon the work of Abū 'Ubāda, an eminent 2nd/8th century Arab bard, who was better known as the court poet, al-Buḥturī. <sup>96</sup> The moment illustrated represents Abū Zayd's attempt to convince the assembly that the verses were his own composition and that he was innocent of plagiarism, and the four very concise lines of Arabic begin as follows ...

"He said, 'By Allāh, right is most worthy to be followed, and trust is most fitting to be listened to. Know, friends, that it is his who talks with you today'. Said al-Ḥarīth, 'Now it was as though the company doubted of his fathering, and were unwilling to give credit to his claim. And he perceived what had fallen into their thoughts, and was aware of their inward unbelief, and was afraid that blame might chance to him, or ill-fame reach him, so he quoted from the Qur'ān, "Some suspicions are a sin"'. "<sup>97</sup>

Al-Wāsitī has included the textual exegesis of a commentator in red zigzag lines down the right hand side of the folio. The commentary appears to be justifying the truth of his claim by quoting poetry in support of Abu Zayd, and the script seems to be in al-Wāsitī's hand. If so, he will have followed the scholiast.

Paris B.N. arabe 5847, f.5v:1B8, Mq. 2.



Al-Hārith is probably the figure at the left hand side; he remains consistent in appearance throughout the Maqāmāt even although the chronological span of the 50 tales is wide. Abū Zayd is at the extreme right of the illustration, in accordance with the text, where he "sat down at the edge of the throng" and consulted a man reading a book. <sup>98</sup> This work should represent the volume of poetry by Abū 'Ubāda, upon which Abū Zayd has had the temerity to improve.

Abū Zayd is not of a "squalid aspect", <sup>99</sup> but he does have the requisite "short thick beard". <sup>100</sup> One should bear in mind that this is one of the earlier tales, and Abū Zayd's beard is not yet white. Al-Wāsiṭī as scribe would have a good insight into Abū Zayd's defects as the tales progressed, yet he invariably portrayed him in a kindly light, despite what he knew of his motivation and behaviour. This may imply that as his affinity with Abū Zayd grew, so did his portrayal of him as a character in his own right, and not as a mere 'type'; perhaps he even sought to gain more sympathy for our hero, as an old man. The other men are the standard, well-dressed bourgeois types one would expect to find in a prestigious city library, and their hand gestures indicate that they are disputing Abū Zayd's personal claim to authorship of his commentary.

The human scene in the lower register brings to mind the 'author portrait' in form and content. This had a classical prototype, and one recalls the nine distinguished physicians of antiquity who hold books in the Galen Kitāb al-Tiryāq Paris manuscript B.N. arabe 2964 of 595/1199. <sup>101</sup> There is a further parallel with that manuscript in the 'framing' of this group of scholars, which is now much expanded from the sage and student alone within a small niche, elsewhere in the Galen manuscript. <sup>102</sup> This convention also occurs in the Dioscorides De



Materia Medica manuscript of 1224,<sup>103</sup> and it is particularly striking in the London B.L. or. 1200 manuscript, in Maqāma 29.<sup>104</sup> It is a device which was taken up later by Persian painters.

The author portrait persisted in Arab painting right up to the end of the 7th/13th century, with the 686/1287 Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Safā double frontispiece presenting a particularly sophisticated form.<sup>105</sup> A little known manuscript of 698/1299 in Istanbul, the Marzubān-nāma, depicts its author, Sa'd al-Dīn Varāvīni, describing his work to a group of men.<sup>106</sup> It is significant that this manuscript had been recast in Persian early in the 7th/13th century, and it is a critical work which marks the turning point of manuscript illustration in post-Mongol Conquest Baghdad towards the new art of Iranian-Mongol painting.<sup>107</sup>

Finally, there is a further, more subtle, element in common with the author portraits, that is, the implicit notions of instruction, presentation and approbation. Al-Wāsiṭī's miniature is thus aptly sited under the caption which continues "... it is on trial that men are to be honoured or despised."<sup>108</sup> Abū Zayd has confidently set himself up as an authority who will be challenged and ultimately obtain the esteem of the assembly.

An interior scene is suggested by a decorative framework of ruled uprights with finials, and a pair of very decorative spandrels indicate the entrance to this section of the library. They are deeply carved with tight floral whorls, and looser variations of these are found on textiles,<sup>109</sup> ceramics,<sup>110</sup> manuscript painting<sup>111</sup> and metalwork.<sup>112</sup>

An additional component of depth is introduced by the upward-turned book in the foreground and the postures of the men, whose turbans are patently in front of the bookshelves; the corbels of the shelves also

emphasise depth.

Four rows of leather bound volumes are stacked on their sides on a range of shelves. Perspective has been attempted by enclosing each small compartment within simple spandrels. These are surely more decorative than practical, for they severely limit the number and size of volumes which can be stored, and this implies that libraries were huge buildings. <sup>113</sup> In late 4th/10th century Cairo the palace library of the second Fatimid ruler Al-‘Azīz housed forty collections of books, viz. forty rooms of books, and the "ancient sciences" alone were represented by eighteen thousand volumes. <sup>114</sup> Identical niches appear in the Leningrad S.23 library, <sup>115</sup> and the books there were also stored flat on their sides, one above the other. This same type of shelving and stacking of volumes occurs in an illustration of an astronomers' library in a 10th/16th century *Shāhanshāhi-nāma* manuscript in Istanbul, <sup>116</sup> and the practice continues up to the present time. <sup>117</sup>

It is not possible here to see if book titles are inscribed on the leather covers, but there must have been some indicator of each of the works on a shelf and of its category and contents. In Paris B.N. 3929 one finds some book titles where the word *dīwān* {a collection} <sup>118</sup> is clearly legible. Grabar says that these were obviously the poetry books required by the text, so they might include the name of Abū ‘Ubāda. <sup>119</sup> This bears out al-Muqaddasī's report that catalogues were shelved in each department according to subject matter. <sup>120</sup>

Al-Muqaddasī also said that volumes were laid flat on shelves in wood-veneered cupboards which were three yards wide by two yards long; <sup>121</sup> wooden doors folded downwards, <sup>122</sup> but these are not illustrated. These valuable volumes are not chained. It is likely that

this setting is the Arabic philology and poetry room in the Basra public library, for when the philosopher Ibn Sīna was summoned as a doctor to attend the Sāmānīd prince Nuḥ, he asked permission to use his library in Bukhāra and he mentioned such a department there. <sup>123</sup>

The crenellated frieze of the building resembles that in the illustration in Leningrad S.23 of the Palace of the Governor of Marw in Maqāma 38. <sup>124</sup> It too featured an abstract floral motif of leaves. Further examples are found elsewhere on architecture in contemporary Iraq. <sup>125</sup>

The pyramid-shaped roof is apparently made of woven matting or small tiles laid in a chevron pattern, and it infers that a further covered area lies behind this section of the library. Similar roofs can be seen elsewhere in al-Wāsitī's manuscript <sup>126</sup> as well as on the Leningrad S.23 slave market in Maqāma 34. <sup>127</sup> Al-Wāsitī's miniature conforms to al-Muqaddasi's description of a large ante-room in a library leading on to a long arched hall with rooms on all sides, where scholars from all disciplines could converse in peace. <sup>128</sup> An account by al-Miskawayh confirms this; 'Adūd al-Dawla had a room built adjoining his own suite in his palace library at Shīrāz which was reserved for very high-level scholarly discussions and held away from the common people. <sup>129</sup>

No windows are shown, and one wonders what form of illumination was used, for libraries would be a potential fire hazard, particularly in a very hot, dry climate. Ibn 'Aqīl spoke in the past tense of a library in the Karkh area of Baghdād, which was famous in its day but burned down in the mid-5th/11th century. <sup>130</sup>

Al-Wāsitī's library is obviously a substantial and fairly elaborate building of some importance in a town that was famed as a seat of

scholarship, and the group of 'scholars' <sup>131</sup> reflects the esteem in which learning was held at that time. Perhaps the generosity of a benefactor is also illustrated. The endowment of libraries is confirmed in Ibn Khallikān's Wafayāt, <sup>132</sup> Al-Khaṭīb, who died in 463/1071 ordered {among other bequests} that all his books should be appropriated as a waqf for the use of Muslims. <sup>133</sup>

In 1233 the Caliph Al-Mustansir built a cosmopolitan library in Baghdād where there were hundreds of librarians looking after hundreds of thousands of books. <sup>134</sup> Yāqūt wrote in praise of a library in Marw where he worked for 3 years, <sup>135</sup> and he mentioned that Marw had 10 wealthy libraries; these included two in the jāmi', with the others being attached to madāris {s. madrasa}. <sup>136</sup> As a distinguished writer, he was allowed to take out two hundred volumes without leaving a pledge. <sup>137</sup> The cost of borrowing was about one dīnār or gold coin per volume. <sup>138</sup> As this was an enormous sum at that time, the conclusion is that those who frequented libraries were of sound financial means, and there is everything in al-Wāsiṭī's portrait to suggest that this was so.

It is not clear why Pauty should describe this library as "a bookseller's", <sup>139</sup> and one assumes that he did not read the Arabic text, viz., dar kutūbihā, which translates freely as "the house of its {the city of Basra} books". <sup>140</sup> It is true that the relative cheapness of paper made for the ready availability of literature to a widening public, and bookshops flourished as centres for litterateurs and calligraphers. In the 4th/10th century one particular street in Baghdād, Sūq al-warrāqīn, could boast 100 booksellers. <sup>141</sup> Their shops, and those of the papersellers, occupied both side of the roadway from the Ḥarrānī Archway to the New Bridge over the Sarāṭ Canal in Baghdad in the 'Abbāsīd

period.<sup>142</sup> Ibn Khallikān mentioned an Egyptian bookseller who died in 607/1210 who

"used to sit in the vestibule of his house for the purpose of exercising his profession, offering books for sale to men of rank and learning ... they were accustomed to assemble there every Sunday and Wednesday, and remain till the hours of sale were over."<sup>143</sup>

However, it is obvious that al-Wāṣitī depicted a library.

We have no way of knowing how much al-Wasiti was paid, either as artist or scribe. When the calligrapher 'Umar ibn Ḥassan al-Khaṭṭāṭ died in 552/1157, his writing implements, which included inkwells, pencils and knives, were sold for nine hundred Amīri dīnārs.<sup>144</sup>, yet Ibn 'Aqīl, who died early in the 6th/12th century, complained of his poverty-stricken circumstances as a copyist.<sup>145</sup>

Two accounts exemplify how precious books were to some readers. In the early 4th/10th century Ishāq Ibn 'Imrān wrote in a medical treatise on depression,

"So the loss of a beloved child or of an irreplaceable library can release such sadness and dejection that melancholy is the result."<sup>146</sup>

Ibn Tiqṭaqa, writing at the beginning of the 7th/13th century, relates how "a certain Caliph sent for a certain scholar", who was late. The ruler pardoned his tardiness when the scholar, who had been engrossed in reading, said of his books,

"We have companions of whose talk we do not tire,  
trusty and trusted, whether absent or here to see,  
They enrich us from their knowledge with knowledge  
of the past, counsel, education, honour and dignity;  
If you say they are dead, you are not wrong, and if  
you say they are alive you do not lie."<sup>147</sup>



One sees the subtle interplay between the Arabic of the text and al-Wāsiṭī's visual interpretation. Al-Muqaddasi refers to a library in Shīrāz as khizānat al-kutūb; the root meaning of khizānat, khazana, has connotations of treasure,<sup>148</sup> so we have both a visual treasury of precious and much loved volumes, and the 'storehouse' of linguistic treasures in Abu Zayd's mind.

### {c} The Schoolroom

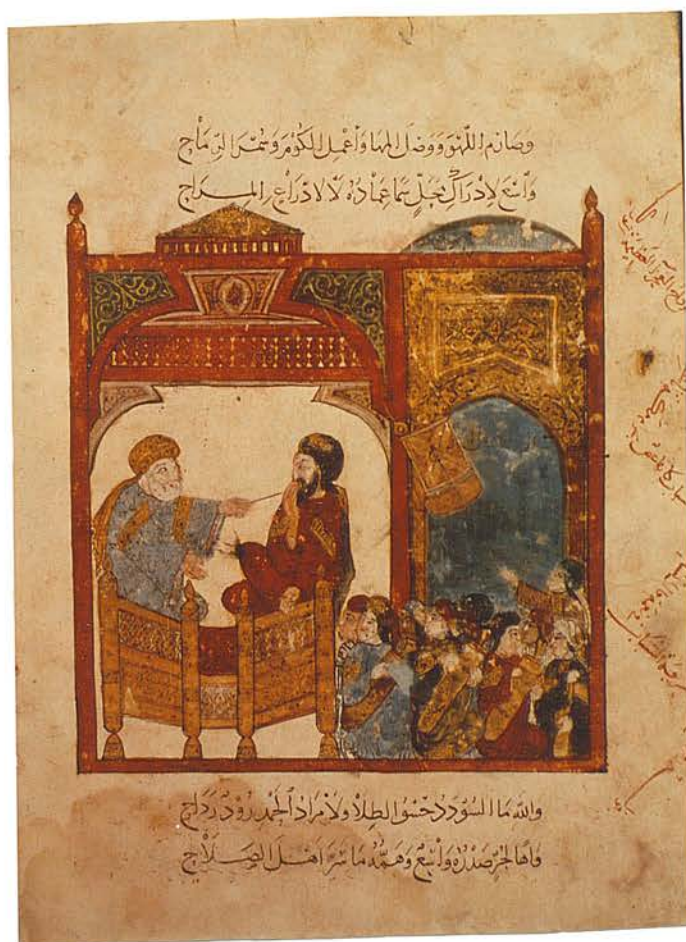
Maqāma 46 is set in Hims, in Syria. Al-Tanūkhī reports that Abu'l-Tayyib ibn 'Abd al-Mu'mīn described Hims as "a foolish and wealthy town",<sup>149</sup> and al-Hārith decides to "sound the {proverbial} stupidity of the people".<sup>150</sup> He is surprised and delighted to find a schoolmaster setting extremely difficult tasks in composition in rhyming couplets to his pupils, and in due course he discovers that the teacher is none other than his old friend Abu Zayd.

Al-Wāsiṭī has illustrated this schoolroom on two folios, and it is the earlier, more elaborate classroom scene which is discussed. The illustration comes near the beginning of the first recitation, which reads

"Cut off thyself from play, avoid wantonness, but ply the  
 camels and the brown supple spears,  
 Strive to obtain a lofty place, pillared high, not to enrobe  
 thyself in gay dalliance,  
 For lordship means, by Allāh, not quaffing wine, nor gain you  
 glory courting girls full of hip,  
 Hail to one free of hand and mind, large of heart, whose only  
 joy is giving joy to the good."<sup>151</sup>

It should be mentioned that the final 'h' of the last word of each of the four lines of text might be construed as a defectively written 'j'. This same text is used by the illustrator of Istanbul E.E. 2916,<sup>152</sup> but he has indicated by a sukūn above the final letter that this is poetry. Under the letter itself, which is an 'h', close examination shows that the painter of Istanbul E.E. 2916 has written a miniature 'h', to make clear beyond all doubt that an 'h' is required, although the mark under al-Wasīṭī's 'h' is ambiguous.

Paris B.N. 5847, f.148v:9A12, Mq. 46.



The recitation is a great achievement by a small boy, and a vindication both of the reputation of the people of Hims and the oft-maligned schoolmaster of the proverb, "More foolish than a teacher of an elementary school". 153

There seems to have been some ambiguity regarding the status in society of a teacher. Ibn al-Kalbī's Kitāb al-mathālib gives a long list of people whose ancestors and fathers had practised trades which were despised by the ancient Arabs; these included smith, tailor and teacher. 154 A schoolmaster's testimony, like those of the bath attendant and the pigeon trainer, was accorded only partial validity in the eyes of the jurists. 155 This was despite the Qur'ānic prescription, " ... and call two of your men to act as witnesses". 156

Al-Jāhīz counselled, "Seek no advice from teachers, shepherds and those who sit much among women", 157 and he also commented, "Their cakes and bread, that is no good a plague upon such work and food." 158 That is a reference to payment in kind.

However, Abū Dulaf said that the holder of a teaching post was considered responsible enough to lead the ritual prayer, and such a low opinion of the schoolmaster does not seem to have deterred al-Tha'ālibī, who taught children early on in his career. 159 We know that the 8th/14th century hisba manual of market practices of Ibn al-Ukhuwwa, Ma'alim al-qurba fi ahkam al-hisba forbade schoolmasters to allow their charges to read the scandalous Dīwān of al-Hajjāj. 160 This perhaps indicates that teachers were licensed and subject to inspection.

Pupils were enjoined by al-Zarnūjī in his treatise on pedagogy

to hold the teacher in high regard, when he quoted the Prophet's son-in-law, 'Alī, "I am the slave of him who hath taught me even one letter", <sup>161</sup> and Abū Zayd's boys have demonstrated their diligence and enthusiasm for lessons.

A Muslim child learns very early on that reading and writing have religious merit, and their lessons would perhaps embrace religion, the art of versification and polite literature. In this tale, Abū Zayd apparently taught only boys, but girls could receive religious instruction at the lower level. <sup>162</sup> Abū Zayd's curriculum appears to be strictly conventional, for he set his pupils elaborate compositions. In this, he seems to be following precedent, for Ibn Durayd said,

"My teacher was Abū 'Uthmān Ashnandānī' ... One day my uncle came in when this person was repeating to me the poem of Hārith ibn Hillīza which commences 'Asmā' announces her departure'. My uncle promised me a present if I learned the poem by heart. He then invited the teacher to dine with him, and the teacher went to his room, where the two had their meal and sat for a time afterwards. By the time the teacher left the room I had committed to memory the whole dīwān of this poet, so when he came out I told him this; he was incredulous, and began to test me, but found that I had really committed it to memory." <sup>163</sup>

Only nine of the ten boys are shown, perhaps due to lack of space. Although the boys appear to be of a similar age, the text indicates that the first to recite was the oldest, <sup>164</sup> and this suggests that in a one-teacher school there was one composite class. The pupils are dressed in Arab costume and all wear turbans. Their varied skin tones are evidence of a wide Islamic empire, and they seem to be aged about nine years upwards.

They hold their writing tablets at the same angle, and the whole scene is delightfully balanced. These boards are extremely

functional and of a distinctive, oblong shape, with a haft at the top in the form of a tabula ansata. In the absence of a desk, the child would grip the board with one hand to balance it against his body and he would write with the other hand.

We know from the text that the pupils wrote on their boards with a reed pen, <sup>165</sup> and they could wipe them clean. Rosenthal quotes an unnamed 3rd/9th century treatise on education, which stated that a mandīl or the like might be used in school "for wiping the slate clean"; <sup>166</sup> mandīl signified a napkin, towel or handkerchief. <sup>167</sup> A scribe holding a similar writing board is found in an al-Jazarī manuscript dated 755/1354. <sup>168</sup>, and red and yellow writing boards are mentioned by Meredith-Owens in his analysis of a much later copy of Miftah al-Fuzalā'. <sup>169</sup>

The tabula ansata motif was also used on tombstones. Herzfeld has catalogued the classical tabula ansata form found in Egypt, <sup>170</sup> and there is an early 5th/11th century alabaster headstone from Yazd in the British Museum; there, too, a carved tabula ansata inset frames the inscriptions. <sup>171</sup> A stone tomb in Damascus, which is contemporary with the manuscript, features a tabula ansata window lintel with three rows of epigraphy above. <sup>172</sup> The tabula ansata form is distinctly reminiscent of an Egyptian wooden mummy label in the Graeco-Roman period. <sup>173</sup>

The Wāṣitī tablets seem to be wooden, and white writing boards, with a haft and a band of light wood at the top, also appear in the Paris B.N. 6094 schoolroom, which will be discussed later.



In the Wāsiṭī painting al-Ḥārith and the 'teacher' sit on a fairly high carved wooden chair with bell-shaped feet, pointed finials and small carved balusters. It is made of light wood and it is not the reddish teak which is apparently shown elsewhere in the illustration. Even bearing in mind that chairs were not a typical Muslim feature, Abū Zayd's seat is a recognisable piece of furniture which bears some resemblance to the thrones in later Persian manuscripts.<sup>174</sup> From this vantage point, a teacher would be able to watch his class carefully.

No teaching aids such as blackboard or books are shown, and the inference is that Abū Zayd followed a very successful method of rote-learning; this has been established by the text. Abū Zayd holds a pointer {'usayya}; this is the diminutive of "staff", and its root has connotations of disobedience and punishment.<sup>175</sup> Abū Zayd told al-Ḥārith that his temporary profession as pedagogue was most lucrative, and that a pedagogue could be as despotic in school as any prince in his milieu.<sup>176</sup> The point is well-taken in the miniature in the Istanbul E.E. 2916 manuscript, where the 'teacher' is administering the bastinado; it is reproduced at the end of this Wāsiṭī discussion for comparative purposes.

Schoolroom scenes appear in a variety of media, for example on a candlestick in a private collection which was exhibited in 1976 at the Museum of Mankind, London.<sup>177</sup> An illustration in a 9th/15th century Nizāmī manuscript in the British Museum shows a more informal scene of teacher and pupils.<sup>178</sup> The teacher is not on a dais, and his girl and boy pupils seem to be left to their own devices, both indoors and outdoors; the theme of the star-crossed

lovers, Layla and Majnūn, occurs in a Khurasānian manuscript in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, showing them at school. 179 All of these school settings take place in a more relaxed atmosphere than that circumscribed by the architecture of al-Wāsiṭī's schoolroom and, so far as ceramics were concerned, their round shape might have facilitated a more informal composition.

The classroom is in an imposing building, and it is lit and well-ventilated by a tiled and wooden roof 'dome' of a type which has been noted elsewhere in this manuscript, for example on the narrow house like the "Ark of Moses" in Maqāma 15. 180 It was evidently constructed to encourage air-flow.

The carved wooden frieze or balustrade may be of teak [sāj], and its balusters match those on Abū Zayd's bench. A cusped archway highlights Abū Zayd and al-Hārith, and two very elaborate and deeply cut inset panels of an unidentifiable material with a vegetal motif flank it. The smaller, lower spandrels, appear to be stuccowork. It seems that certain types of carved marble arabesques were especially designed to fit within niches and spandrels of mihrābs and doorways, 181 and perhaps this is also the case with other materials.

Behind the children there appears to be a separate room. This is lit by a clerestory window in a large dome, and it is rather gloomy. The pointed entrance to this area is very elaborate, and it is possibly constructed from painted or gilded carved wood. It is reminiscent of a mihrāb, and indeed there are some vestiges of epigraphy on the blue background near the pointed arch which possibly read part of "Allah". We know that schools were attached

to mosques; the wazīr Nizām al-Mulk quotes from a 5th/11th century epistle to the Commander of the Faithful where one, Maḥmūd, said,

"One of my servants was walking in the bazaar at Samargand, and he passed by a mosque, where a master was holding a Qur'ānic school and teaching some boys." 182

It is not clear whether secular works were also taught in a purely Qur'ānic school, but grammar was sometimes taught, and calligraphy was always included in the curriculum in 'Abbāsid times. 183

Ibn Jubayr visited a school for orphan boys in Damascus in July-August, 1184, which was a religious endowment or waqf which provided instruction and board. He was favourably impressed by the "virtues of these lands", 184 and related,

"The instruction of boys in the Qur'ān in all these eastern lands consists only of making them commit to memory; writing they learn through the medium of poetry and other things. The Book of Great and Glorious God is thus kept undefiled from the markings and rubbings out of the boys' efforts. In most {of these} lands the Qur'ān teacher and writing master are separate persons, and from his lesson in Qur'ān reading the student is dismissed to his calligraphy ..." 185

Ibn Jubayr elaborated that erasure of the word 'Allah' might discredit it. 186

We know from the text that Abū Zayd schooled his pupils in Arabic literature, and Ibn Jubayr's account confirms that Abū Zayd could not have taught the Qur'ān.

The following stipulations were included in the "Provisions" of the Mustanşiriya Madrasa, which was endowed in 1234,

"The House of the Holy Qur'ān shall be provided with a learned man, thirty orphan boys and a reciter." 187

and their food rations and financial remuneration were laid down. 188 In this tale Abū Zayd taught boys, but girls could receive religious instruction, at the lower level; 189 generally

speaking, their ultimate role in life may have been seen as at the centre of the home, with the spindle.

Elsewhere, we read that in the Mustanṣiriya

"Each school {of the four law schools} has an īwān in which there is space for lecturing, having a small wooden dome, beneath which the teacher sits upon a bench covered with carpets, a sober figure in his black clothes and turban." 190

It is likely that students in the Mustanṣiriya were older than Abū Zayd's boys.

An alternative explanation of the setting is that Abū Zayd was teaching at his home. A common expression found in source material is, "He sat at the door of his house". 191 This indicates that people frequently sat by the side of the door on mats or carpets, or on a raised dukkān or platform. Learned men and teachers used the dukkān as a classroom, and al-Washshā' one hot summer evening in Baghdad saw a secretary sitting on a teak dukkān which was profusely decorated with verses written in lapis lazuli. 192

If al-Wāṣiṭī's schoolroom is set in Abū Zayd's home, then this statement is borne out, for the house is commodious and well constructed, and the parents seem to reward him well. However, the architecture is rather monumental in scale and decoration, and an adaptation of a mosque setting is more plausible.

One of Abū Zayd's pupils activates a punka by means of cords and pulleys, and it runs in fine counterpoint to the angle of the writing boards, as well as tying in the class with the teacher. A punka was a fan made from matting called līf, which came from the membranous fibres that grow at the base of the palm tree. 193 Such a utilitarian version would suffice for a schoolroom, and it is

repeated in al-Wāsiṭi's second miniature of this scene. It is the plebeian version of the mirwa, which was a delicately constructed fan with silken cords and fringes dipped in perfumed water; 194 the mirwa was also manipulated by 'mechanical devices' {presumably pulley wheels} over an assembly or in private apartments, and the air became diffused with the perfume.

In Maqāma 42 Abū Zayd sets a riddle concerning a punka which sums up well the action in this miniature. He said ...

"A maiden I know, brisk, full of speed in her ministry,  
returning the same track that she went by when starting off:  
A driver she has, kinsman of hers, who is urging her, but  
while he thus is speeding her on, is her helpmate too.  
In summer she is seen dew-besprinkled and moist and fresh,  
When summer is gone her body shows flabby and loose  
and dry." 195

This description suggests that the schoolroom version would be sprinkled with water. The technical discussion of the khaysh in the lawcourt on f.188v of Istanbul E.E. 2916 applies to the punka; both were sited in an air current and worked by evaporation. 196

Al-Ghazālī mentioned the schoolmaster in a short tractate on etiquette entitled Al-Adab fi'l-Dīn. He laid down that

"The teacher's primary concern should be for the excellence of his own character, since the eyes of his students are upon him and their ears filled with what he says. What the teacher considers good will seem good to the pupils; what he considers base and shameful will seem base and shameful to them." 197

Abū Zayd in this instance gives every appearance of being such a paragon, for he has followed al-Ghazālī's recommendations to the



letter, viz.,

"The teacher should seat himself silently in the classroom, alertly supervising the students. He should accomplish the major part of instruction and discipline by evoking the awe and respect of his pupils, not by whipping and punishment." 198

The exemplary behaviour of his class and their mastery of extremely difficult Arabic language, poetry and calligraphy are clear demonstrations of Abū Zayd's success. Once again, al-Wāṣitī seems to have been as charmed by Abū Zayd as al-Ḥārith was, for he has portrayed Abū Zayd in the best possible light.

We see Abū Zayd meting out the bastinado to an unfortunate child in the badly damaged Istanbul E.E. 2916 manuscript, which is reproduced overleaf for comparison only. There is no mention of chastisement in the text; these pupils were paragons, like their master.



The treatment of the schoolroom scene in Paris B.N. 6094 follows. It appears at the portion of the text where Abū Zayd instructs the second pupil,

" '{Display the bridal couplets}, even though they be not of the choicest'. Then he mended his reed-pen and nibbed it, Whereupon he took the tablet in his lap and wrote ..., 'Fair Tajānī has maddened me and bewitched me with her thousands of wily tricks and beguilements Has enamoured me with the droop of her eyelids, as a doe's, draining mine of tears through her love-charm..'" 199

Paris, B.N. arabe 6094, f. 167:9A11, Mq. 46



Al-Ḥārith and Abū Zayd are seated on cushions at the extreme left of the composition, and Abū Zayd holds what appears to be a split cane. He may have used this to chastise his pupils, and it could be an early variant of the Scottish tawse or split leather strap which was used on pupils until recently. It is obvious that the rod was viewed as a necessary part of the schoolmaster's equipment.

Abū Zayd's pose may be based on royal iconography. He is shown in a frontal position, with one foot raised, and he slightly inclines his head to one side. It is almost a mirror image of this artist's governor of Raḥba in Maqāma 10.<sup>200</sup> However, a more likely explanation is that Abū Zayd's portrait represents a variation of a medical manuscript illustration, where the doctor is holding up a plant and explaining its properties to a student, for example the roughly-contemporary De Materia Medica of Dioscorides in Istanbul.<sup>201</sup> The physician's plant has been transformed here into a split cane which is, after all, a dried plant.

There is an underlying sense of energy in this manuscript which has been commented upon elsewhere in the context of the carriage and manners of the Syrian people. In consequence, these pupils are apparently not well-disciplined, although the movement does reflect their enthusiasm. They are a fairly motley crowd of children; some wear turbans, while others sport a variety of

Central Asian hats. The knee-length costume of the boy second from the right is executed in the same curious manner as women's robes in this manuscript; <sup>202</sup> these accentuated the shape of the hips and stomach.

Abū Zayd is framed by a flat archway which is decorated with a 'meander' and interlace pattern and topped with a dome with finial. The dome is dark and finely decorated with a palmette motif. Al-Ḥārith, in his capacity as observer, is outside the arch. There is no real sense of depth in this composition, and possibly because of this the teacher, although sitting serenely, does not seem to be in full control of his charges. It would be fairly easy to interpret this scene as Abū Zayd sitting at the edge of the dihlīz of his home, with one foot outside. Perhaps the artist has portrayed a private tutor at court, or it may be that the only models he had for youths were non-Arab ghilmān from the royal repertoire.

The real importance of this illustration is that it provides us with a colophon. The seated boy nearest to Abū Zayd holds up a board which proclaims that the manuscript was executed in the year 619/1222; this has been discussed when introducing Paris B.N. 6094. Perhaps this information was intended as a form of pun.

A slightly earlier school scene can be found on a well-known Persian lustre plate from Kāshan which is now in the David Collection in Copenhagen. <sup>203</sup> It shows the child lovers, Layla and



Majnūn, in the same school room. All the pupils there also have writing tablets in the tabula ansata form and they sit around the schoolmaster, who is holding a rod. The round plate shape obviously lends itself to a circular composition, and this suggests an informality which is easier to achieve than is possible within the confines of an architectural setting. There is a bookstand in the classroom scene on the Kāshān plate, which is absent in the manuscript illustrations. Perhaps Abū Zayd taught by the rote-learning method. In the schoolroom setting on the candlestick already referred to, the teacher had a pointer, and his pupils appeared to be fairly unruly. 204

Although each manuscript has its own architectural scheme, no specific school architecture can be gleaned from the illustrations. They depend on the inclusion of children with writing boards and a man with a pointer for the context to be clear.

We turn now to musicians and their role in society. They are discussed in the context of the taverns in Paris B.N. 3929 and London B.L. 1200, although the al-Wasīṭī and Leningrad S.23 drinking-dens will be fully analysed in "Hospitality".

{d} Musicians

Maqāma 12 finds al-Ḥārith in 'Ana, a town noted for wine. He is following up a disquieting report that the old man in "the garb of an ascetic" who successfully led al-Ḥārith and a group across the desert had been sighted in a tavern. Taverns, wine-halls and drinking throughout mediaeval Muslim society are discussed at great length in Chapter 8, and the discussion here is restricted to entertainers and their instruments.

The illustration in Paris B.N. arabe 3929, which follows, is a confrontation scene; the text represents al-Ḥārith's description of the sight that met his eyes in the tavern.

"And at one time he bade broach the wine casks, and at another he called the lutes {to give utterance.}" <sup>205</sup>



{ālāti}; <sup>206</sup> musicians generally were considered to be low in social status. <sup>207</sup> A handsome mature woman plays her lute at centre stage. The term used in the text for 'lute' is not the usual ūd, but mizhar.<sup>208</sup>

The lute was suitable both for ensemble and solo performance, and known as amīr al-ṭarab, viz., "the prince of enchantment"; it was fretless, pear-shaped and short-necked, as the illustration demonstrates. <sup>209</sup> Details of its construction come to us in an account in the Ḥalbat of al-Kumayt. <sup>210</sup> A drunk young man was brought before the Umayyad Caliph 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān. 'Abd al-Malik pointed to his instrument and asked what it was. The youth replied,

"O, Prince of the Faithful, this is a lute; it is made by taking some wood of the pistachio tree, and cutting it into thin pieces, and gluing these together, and then attaching over them these pleasant chords, which, when a beautiful girl touches them, sends forth sounds more pleasant than rain falling upon a desert land." <sup>211</sup>

The lutanist's very long hair hangs down loose under her small pointed headdress, her full cheeks are rouged, and she has a beauty spot on her lower left cheek. She therefore matches the ideals of female beauty which are discussed at length in relation to the young jāriya in Maqāma 18 in this manuscript. <sup>212</sup>

Lutanists appear in other media. A veiled lute-player occurs on a cartouche of the British Museum Blacas ewer, <sup>213</sup> which was made in Mosul in 1232. Yet another appears on a contemporary tile from Konya, <sup>214</sup> and a group of musicians, which includes a lutanist, is found on an 8th/14th-century Syrian enamelled and gilded flask. <sup>215</sup>

The woman is wearing a heavy gold necklace; this might be a reflection of her skills, for entertainers were rewarded handsomely, as a 4th/10th century anecdote recounted by al-Tanūkhī reveals. 216

"I have been informed by a number of Muhallabi's associates that on a certain night Muhallabi distributed among them, and a number of singers, entertainers, etc. who were present, coin and raiment to the value of five thousand dīnārs." 217

This was an enormous sum.

That other patrons were less generous, is obvious from a witticism attributed to Abū'l-Aynā', who had a reputation for smartness. 218 When he was asked by a singing girl to give her his ring, that she might have something tangible to remember him by, he replied, "You can remember that you asked me for it and were refused". 219

It is possible that our lutanist was also a singer {gayna}, 220 for al-Jāhiz reports that Yazīd ibn 'Abd al-Malik had a singer, Ḥabāba, of whom a poet said,

"When her lute responds plaintively to her {voice}, and beneath its influence the hearing of the noble guests is filled with yearning, and all ears hearken to it in silence, as though they were asleep when they sleep not!" 221

Concerning Yazīd's other slave, Sallāma, the poet asked,

"Have you not heard her {marvellous as she is}, when she raises her voice in song, how skilful is her execution; she renders the thread of the lyric in such a way as to render it to a turtle-dove cooing in her throat." 222

She could reduce Yazīd to tears.

Al-Jāhiz was of the opinion that,

"The singing-girl is hardly ever sincere in her passion, or wholehearted in her affection. For both by training and by innate instinct her nature is to set up snares and traps for



the victims, in order that they may fall into her toils." <sup>223</sup> Al-Jāhiz confirmed that singing-girls might also be instrumentalists; he said that as part of a singing-girl's wiles, she corresponds with a paramour, seals her letter with saffron and "ties it up with a piece of lutestring". <sup>224</sup>

There is a further association between playing the lute and singing, for Firdawsi's Shāh-nāma tells how Khusraw's favourite male singer, Barbad, hid in a tree while Khusraw and a group held a picnic below. The illustration for this episode in the Houghton manuscript in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, which Welch attributes to 1522 or slightly later, clearly shows him playing his lute in the tree. <sup>225</sup>

Although Sūrat al-Wāqī'a describes the rewards of Paradise in glowing terms and mentions fruits, goblets, ewers, and immortal youths in attendance, <sup>226</sup> there is no mention of the entertainers and musical instruments which are, apparently, so closely associated with scenes of revelry. <sup>227</sup> The Prophet said,

"Singing and hearing songs can cause hypocrisy to grow in the heart, like as water promoteth the growth of corn." <sup>228</sup>

and this is certainly true in Abū Zayd's case.

Our entertainer's ample robe features a pale blue vegetal scroll pattern on a darker field. Although Grabar in his analysis of this tale says that "no women or young boys are shown" in this particular illustration, <sup>229</sup> in his later section on women in general in the Maqāmāt he mentions "a female companion of Abū Zayd in a tavern wearing clothes that probably signify the class of

singer/prostitute". 230

Ibn al-Tiḡtaḡā recounts that the enemies of Marwān I, the conqueror of Egypt, dishonoured him by calling him "child of the woman in blue". 231 This was a reference to his grandmother who was said to be "one of the women with blue flags, with which they used to indicate whoreshops in the age of ignorance". 232

Al-Tanūkhī repeats an anecdote which came to him on the authority of the qādī Abū Bakr, who had been present at a sitting of a lawcourt. 233 The litigant in a debt case told of his son "who wastes my substance over singing girls", explaining that the trouble was "due to a procurer named {he mentioned the name}". 234 Further, al-Jāḥiẓ was of the opinion that the majority of men who frequented taverns did so for sexual purposes. 235

There appears to be no way of knowing precisely what was the function of al-Jāḥiẓ's {manāzil al-qiyaṇ} 236 or 'singing-girls' houses', but these accounts do suggest that, on occasion at least, singing-girls were associated in the minds of some people with prostitution.

A dark-skinned male musician in Arab robes is playing the {mizmār} or "pipe" of the text. 237 Mediaeval dictionaries describe mizmar as a "musical reed, or pipe". 238 It was about 12-14 inches long, and it was end-blown, as the illustration shows. 239 The old Arabic name was gussāba or qasba. 240

A mizmār is shown on folio 26 of the 8th/14th century British

Library Add. 22.114 Maqāmāt manuscript tavern. <sup>241</sup> One also appears on a 5th/11th century Fāṭimid ivory in Florence, <sup>242</sup> a 5th/11th century Cordovan ivory casket in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, <sup>243</sup> and a late 7th/13th to early 8th/14th century candlestick from northwest Persia in the Louvre. <sup>244</sup>

Musical instruments played their part in the mystical poetical language, particularly of Rūmī, for they were seen to represent the cadences of eternal harmony; metaphorically, only the lips of the Friend caused the flute to speak. <sup>245</sup> The mizmār differed from the flute, which was obliquely-blown.

The artist has added a drummer with an unusual, small hand-drum which seems to be the only example of this type in the Maqāmāt miniatures, and is uncalled for by the text, which mentions only "the pipe {mizmār} and the lute {mizhar}". <sup>246</sup>

Although I have been unable to find this type of drum listed in Lane's Lexicon of mediaeval Arab dictionaries, it appears to conform to a modern-day description of the darabukka, which is described as "a conical, one-headed hand drum, open at the small end." <sup>247</sup> If this is relevant, then Lane's relatively modern account of the instrument also seems to apply; "it is placed under the left arm, generally suspended by a string that passes over the left shoulder, and is beaten with both hands". <sup>248</sup> This description fits the drummer's actions.

The illustration seems to be a parody of the princely cycle, which has been discussed at some length. We might turn now to the "tavern" in London B.L. 1200.



The tambourine and what appears to be a "broken-necked" lute are easily identifiable, and a lutanist playing a similar type of instrument occurs on a fragment of a 7th/13th-century Syrian bowl with underglaze painted decoration.<sup>249</sup> It may be that the small musician in the background at the right hand side is playing a dulcimer-type of stringed instrument, although he does not have a

hammer or striking implement. Ibn Khallikān's Wafayāt mentions the combination of dulcimer and lute in a mid-4th/10th century eulogy of al-Mawsilī,

"All the apparatus of our pleasant parties is in grief,  
And the lute sympathises with the dulcimer".<sup>250</sup>

The courtly themes of drinkers, lutanist, and possibly dancers appear on Syrian ware of that period,<sup>251</sup> as well as in the Cappella Palatina, Palermo.<sup>252</sup>

A tambourine-player in a similar pose is found in a polylobed medallion on the Cleveland ewer.<sup>253</sup> Two tambourine-players occur in a riotous drinking scene in the Dīwān of Ḥāfiẓ, by Sultan Muhammad 'Irāqī, which is dated c. 1527.<sup>254</sup> A tambourine-player also accompanies Khusraw's favourite singer and lute-player, Barbad, in the British Library or. 2265 Khamsa of Nizāmī manuscript dated 1539-43.<sup>255</sup>

Given the quality of this manuscript in general, the painter has surprisingly depicted a very unusual and comprehensive scene in the context of music. In both of the above illustrations the artists have gone beyond textual requirements.

#### {e} Professional mourners.

Maqāma 11 is set in Sāwa, a Persian town, where the peripatetic al-Ḥārith recounts at the beginning how he became



conscious of "hardness of heart".<sup>256</sup> From the 4th/10th century onwards a new form of piety had sprung up, that of visiting tombs and cemeteries of saints. Heeding a Hadith of the Prophet,

"Visiting tombs makes one self-denying in this life and mindful of the life to come."<sup>257</sup>

al-Hārith set off for a cemetery with devotional intent.

Paris, B.N. arabe 5847, f.29v:2E11, Mq. 11.



Rice and James have analysed various aspects of al-Wāṣiti's cemetery scene, <sup>258</sup> and here the discussion is restricted to the 'addadāt, or professional women mourners {s. 'addada}. <sup>259</sup>

Three bare-headed, dishevelled women at the top of the illustration stand out from the group around the tomb; their energetic movements set them apart from the wan sad figures nearest the grave, and each seems to perform a particular role. The principal player in the drama, who stands at the centre, has placed her hands upon her head. Her companion at the right hand side is beating her breast, an act known as qayna, <sup>260</sup> while the other at the left hand side seems to be pulling her hair into disarray <sup>261</sup> and grasping her robe.

A will from Fustāt dated 1113 set aside a sum to cover funeral expenses, and specifically mentioned "singers". <sup>262</sup> Qayna also means a female singer. <sup>263</sup> The leader delivers a eulogy {radda} of the deceased; presumably she will have made discreet enquiries regarding the name of the deceased, family relationship, status in the community, and so forth, while her companions enact the part of al-musthafqiha, that is, one who provides the responses. <sup>264</sup> Al-Wasiti has emphasised this reciprocal role by the eye movements of the principal professional mourner and al-musthafqiha at left centre. The Tāj al-'Arūs defines the term as one who "catches, retains quickly and understands", <sup>265</sup> and this seems to imply some talent for deft improvisation of the lament {'addūda} <sup>266</sup> on the part of the wailing women, albeit honed by experience. It is possible that they had a series of standard lamentations, which could be adapted to include the names of particular deceased. <sup>267</sup>

These women therefore formally articulate the grief of the family and will, in some way, strive to introduce the principal players in the drama to be unfolded.

It is noticeable that the simple garments of all the women are without ṭirāz, which is very unusual indeed in Paris B.N. 5847, and these may have been regarded as 'old clothes'. Ibn Ṭiqṭaqā relates that Abū'l-Ataḥiyya mentioned al-Mahdi's slave-girls, at his death in the late 2nd/8th centuries, when

"They went in figured silk, then came in sackcloth." 268

Two of the professionals wear greenish-coloured garments, while their leader is identified by her red robe. We know from al-Bukhārī's Ṣaḥīḥ that in the pre-Islamic period a woman wore her worst clothes. 269 The Prophet proscribed dyed mourning robes for women, except for those made from a Yemeni fabric called 'aṣb; 270 this had threads which had been dyed before weaving. 271

The red and green robes perhaps indicate that the women were hired for this funeral, for the "Section on Fashionable Ladies" by al-Washshā' says that in the 4th/10th century {at least} red clothing was " ... only worn by Nabatean women and singing-girls of the slave class". 272 However, I have found no literary reference elsewhere which suggests that professional mourners were also slaves. In any event, it is likely that they were perceived as being on the margins of society.

The principal female family mourner also wears red. One wonders if al-Wāsiṭī has deliberately chosen these red and green for his composition to emphasise the role of the hired women and to link them with the family. The technical name for a mourning garment,

thawb al-hidād, may be a later development, and seems only to appear in Ibn Ḥanbal's Musnad.<sup>273</sup> Al-hidād implies a garment dyed a very dark black.<sup>274</sup> The eulogising of the dead and the wailing of women were proscribed by the Prophet, on the grounds that they were relics of the pre-Islamic period.<sup>275</sup> Confirmation of the social status of these women lies in another ḥadīth, which recounts that they are cursed by God.<sup>276</sup>

It is arguable that there is a need for the professionals' services, because detailed ritual {and public health} prescriptions contribute to the orchestration of grief within a very short time-scale, when the newly-bereaved have little or no time to come to terms with separation. If this is so, their status would validate scenes of personal lack of control at the time of a traumatic rite of passage and, despite their ambivalent social position, they fulfil a valuable role in society.

In the 4th/10th century, Ibn Batta deprecated what he considered the bid'a or innovation of women following a funeral procession and striking their faces;<sup>277</sup> and al-Dhahabī's Kitāb Duwal al-Islām tells us that in 529/1134-5, the death of the long-serving caliph al-Mustarshid bi'llah

"... provoked great emotion in Baghdad. People wailed and ripped their clothing. Women came out of their houses, their hair undone, striking their faces and weeping" while reciting the merits of the deceased."<sup>278</sup>

Weeping and lamentation by Jews in the provinces of the Persian empire are documented in the Old Testament.<sup>279</sup> Jastrow points out that these customs survived from burial rites in Ancient Babylonia.<sup>280</sup>

Emotional outbursts of grief were not confined to women, and accounts elsewhere confirm the above practices, together with the rending of clothing and possessions. <sup>281</sup> However, it is noticeable that mourning clothes are usually described as black or dark blue, and it seems that al-Wāsitī has diverged from this aspect for compositional and aesthetic purposes.

\*\*\*\*\*



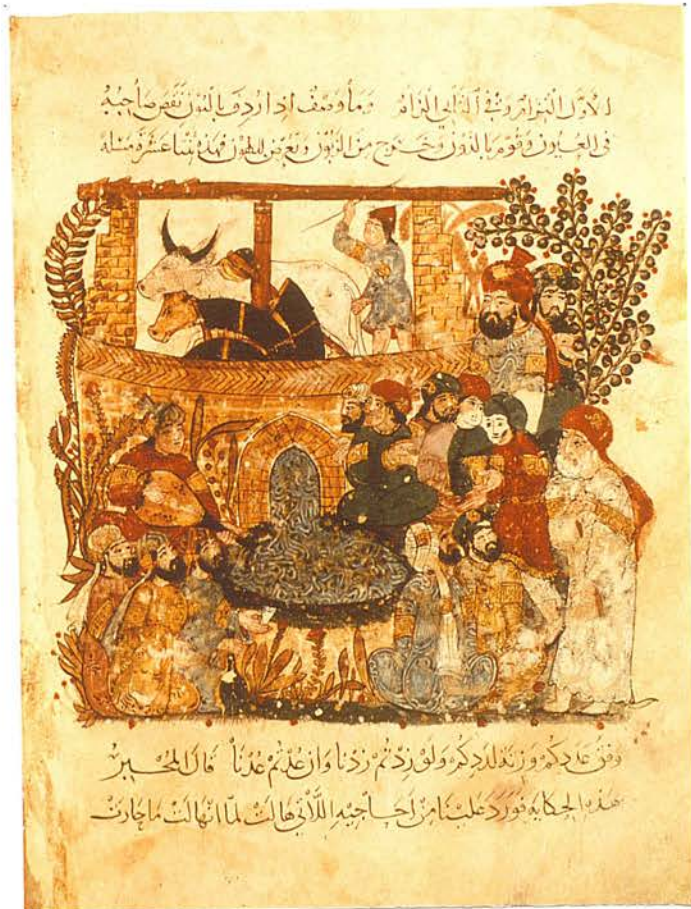
## CHAPTER 6

### ASPECTS OF RURAL LIFE

#### {a} The Waterwheel.

Maqāma 24 is set in a meadow outside Baghdad, in the populous quarter of the city known as al-Rābi', so called because al-Mansūr had granted the land to his chamberlain, Abū'l-Fadl al-Rābi'.<sup>1</sup> Al-Ḥārith and some friends were carousing when they were accosted by a ragged stranger, who initially offended them. However, he was able to enlighten them in their arguments over Arabic grammar and he set them twelve apparently intractable riddles. He offered to tell them the solutions if they gave him a gift. The text comprises two lines above and two lines below the miniature; Abū Zayd is addressing the group, and asks,

"... and what is the epithet which, when it is followed by nūn, he to whom it is applied lessens in men's eyes and is set low in reputation and is reckoned among the simpletons and exposes himself to dishonour? Now these are twelve questions to match your number, to balance your disputatiousness ..." <sup>2</sup>



Al-Wāsiṭi has chosen a wickedly apposite place to insert the illustration, for the "epithet which, when it is followed by nūn" is, of course "sponger" <sup>3</sup> and is the opinion the group held about Abū Zayd. This demonstrates just how tenuous is the dividing line between "guest" and "sponger". Abū Zayd then neatly exacts his revenge for the hostility shown him by adopting a high moral tone and

declining hospitality.

Abū Zayd is the white-bearded figure in the right foreground, while al-Ḥārith is probably the large man with the dark beard beside the tree. Both wear standard Arab dress, but al-Ḥārith's turban is tied in a more elaborate manner than Abū Zayd's. They are drawn on a much larger scale than the remaining characters, and this is perhaps a means of identification. However, this convention of scale was employed in the iconography of the court, and several further points seem to suggest a model from the princely repertoire. Al-Ḥārith could be based on a prince, and in posture and costume he is rather similar to the artist's Governor of Marw in Maqāma 38 who, however seems to be a Saljūq Turk.<sup>4</sup> The lutanist was a standard figure from court life in portraits of rulers 'at ease'.<sup>5</sup>

The peasant lad has indefinable facial features and he wears a curious pointed hat, even although his short robe is Arab and bears tirāz bands. He reminds one of the depictions of the ghulām or page at court who invariably appeared in the background of enthronement scenes, and he may be based on a Saljūq Turk, his courtly fly-whisk now replaced by a plebeian cane to prod the animals.<sup>6</sup> When these four characters are viewed as an isolated group, it is not difficult to envisage the transformation of a princely setting by the addition of vegetation, architecture, a dark wine flagon at left foreground and the other eight people as a requirement of the text. It may be that al-Wāsiṭī had several models at his disposal.

Al-Wāsiṭī correctly shows the twelve men {including al-Ḥārith} mentioned in the caption. They wear typical Arab dress. Their robes have tirāz on the upper arm and are in plain hues of red, blue,

brown, saffron, black and violet. Abū Zayd's garment is white, perhaps as a means of identification. Textile folds are sinuous and decorative, and highlights are sometimes employed. Two faces have been retouched in a schematic fashion; these characters may be youths, for one of them wears a knee-length red robe with gold edging, a gold-coloured belt or girdle and light white trousers {sarāwil} underneath.

One would expect a landscape setting for this tale, and all the manuscripts provide one. The tree at the right hand side is executed in the 'Mesopotamian' manner, which has been previously discussed. Similar trees have been noted elsewhere in contemporary manuscript painting,<sup>7</sup> on metalwork<sup>8</sup> and ceramics.<sup>9</sup> Al-Wāsiṭī's other plants and grass here are typical of his manuscript, but they are now in muted brownish tones. Although they are not particularly intrusive as 'space-fillers', they act as a frame for the composition. The tall papyrus flower on a leafy stem immediately below the pond has already been identified in Maqāma 4 in this manuscript.<sup>10</sup>

The parapet of the wall is laid with bricks which form a chevron pattern. These impart a sense of depth to the illustration, for they suggest something of the circular course of the path the beasts trod, as well as directing the eye to the right of the composition where Abū Zayd stands. The water drawing machine is of solid construction and it must be a variation of the zurnūq, which mediaeval dictionaries describe as signifying twin pillar-like structures {dual, manāratāni}.<sup>11</sup> These were constructed by the head of the well, and a wooden beam {na'āma} was

was laid across them. <sup>12</sup> The function of the serrations on the top left hand side of the na'āma is unclear. Both draught animals are harnessed to a pole which transfixes the upright, movable pillar.

The construction of the black panels of this lifting device indicate that it takes the form of a triple Archimedes screw {tunbūr}. When turned, it lifted the water lying not far below the ground surface with its larger end; the water was then discharged down the length of the screw, here through the pointed brick archway. The principles of Archimedes were well-known and long applied in the Arab world, <sup>13</sup> and water wheels are illustrated elsewhere. <sup>14</sup> There are no obvious channels for irrigation {although it is likely that the contraption was also functional and maintained the vegetation}. The pond is very decorative, and this aspect is achieved by stylised white outlines which recall the Chinese water convention.

No other illustrator has shown a water wheel and, in this, al-Wāsiṭī has once more gone beyond textual requirements. Ibn Taghribirdī mentioned an oxen-slope {ḥadar al-baqar} in the south east quarter of Cairo, which included Qusun's Palace and stables, <sup>15</sup> as well as a waterwheel gate {bāb al-sāqiya}, <sup>16</sup> and in Maqāma 42 Abū Zayd composes a riddle concerning the dūlāb type of water wheel. <sup>17</sup> Around 1300, the Anatolian folk poet and mystic Yunus Emre echoed something of the plaint on the theme of separation even as did Mawlanā Jalal al-Dīn Rumī's reed flute from its reedbed. <sup>18</sup> Emre's water wheel laments its separation from the forest in the following terms, yet it evocatively calls up the rhythmic creaking of the wheel as the animals tread their circular path.



"Oh waterwheel, why do you wail?  
 My grief I wail, my pain I wail,  
 I fell in love with God my Lord,  
 And that is why I weep and wail.  
 They found me on a mountain top;  
 They broke my arms, they broke my limbs,  
 They used my wood to build this wheel:  
 My grief I wail, my pain I wail ... " 19

The implication is clear that water-lifting machines were a feature of extensively cultivated regions. To this extent, al-Wāsiṭī's device is a genre element. However, its very elaborate superstructure and decorative brickwork are possibly superfluous if this is an everyday suburban setting, and an explanation may lie elsewhere. This water wheel scene may demonstrate a further 'royal' connection, in the context of the frontispiece to Volume II of the Cairo Kitāb al-Aghānī manuscript adab 579 dated 614/1217.<sup>20</sup> That painting features an all female group who are standing on a brick built bridge over a water wheel; genre elements of ducks and fish are also shown in the stream. Rice suggested that these women represent a bathing party from a ḥarīm,<sup>21</sup> and the requisite musicians in the milieu of courtly relaxation are also included.

Part of Ibn 'Aqīl's 5th/11th century description of the west bank of Baghdād, al-Karkh, reads ...

" ... on the shore of which are palaces, in orderly disposition, all with water wheels, gardens, and balconies facing {those across the Tigris} ... And the ducks playfully swim together on the wharf of the riverside palace. Many a time would the singing voices of this quarter mix with the sound of the water wheels." <sup>22</sup>

Perhaps al-Wāsiṭī's variation of a contemporary scene was inspired by that Kitāb al-Aghānī frontispiece or by a similar

illustration, by literary accounts or merely by personal observation of an everyday phenomenon. He has, however, gone further, by creating the landscape setting and then using a quite separate model of people to exploit his pictorial space, by determining his main characters and then building up the group around them. In this he has been more successful than the artist of the Vienna Pseudo-Galen Kitāb al-Tiryāq frontispiece of the middle of the 7th/13th century,<sup>23</sup> where the separate registers retain a certain frieze-like quality.

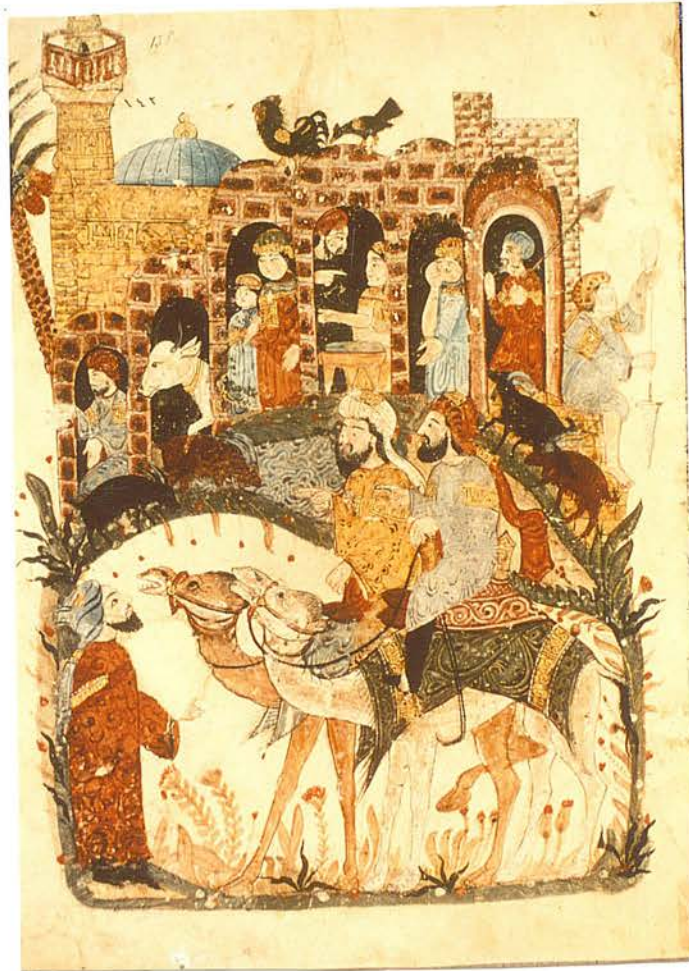
This apparently decorative landscape scene has yielded a surprising amount of information concerning scientific knowledge in the Middle Eastern world of the early 7th/13th century.

#### {b} The Village

Maqāma 43 is set in the Ḥaḍramawt, in Yemen. The tale is extremely long and complicated and it affords Abū Zayd the opportunity of displaying his mastery of Arabic. The full-page illustration in Paris B.N. arabe 5847 depicts the penultimate incident in the story, and there is no text as caption.

Al-Ḥārith related how he and Abū Zayd travelled on

"until the journey brought us to a village ... and forthwith we entered it to forage for provender, for we were both of us short of provisions."<sup>24</sup>



The painting represents two distinct scenes, viz., the meeting with a local lad, and a panorama of the village {garya}. <sup>25</sup>

There was evidently some sort of official halt before or shortly after one entered a village, for the text tells us that they had

"not reached the halting-place, and the spot assigned for the

kneeling down of the camels".<sup>26</sup>

Al-Dūrī says that landmarks such as roads and highways, waterways and hills were used to fix the boundary<sup>27</sup> and the pond for the animals may be such a feature. A ḥadīth invokes God's curse on anyone who changes boundary signs.<sup>28</sup> The illustration makes it clear the pair have not yet entered the village, for the peasant with the mattock over his shoulder is entering it through the gate in the surrounding wall.

Al-Wāsiṭī has 'framed' the encounter within landscape elements of grass, bushes and flowers. The date palm is very realistic; this feature is shared with London B.L. or. 1200.<sup>29</sup> Its positioning beside the mosque recalls verse 14 of Ṣūra 76,

"... the shade thereof is close upon them and the clustered fruits thereof bow down."

Generally speaking, landscape in the Maqāmāt manuscripts tends merely to indicate an exterior setting. Landscape elements have been carried up and around to create a quite separate register at ground level and to capitalise on the increase in the spatial planes. We have already seen this device in al-Wāsiṭī's hajj procession in Maqāma 31.<sup>30</sup>

Here, the grass is suggested by a solid wall of green, interspersed with pale brown plants with reddish blossoms. The three large plants to the left foreground appear to be the papyrus, which occurs prominently on f.11v of this manuscript.<sup>31</sup> The very dark plants serve to define the framework and they also act as foreground space fillers. The same compositional device occurs in Paris B.N. 3929<sup>32</sup> and the Istanbul Kitāb al-Bayṭara of 606/1210.<sup>33</sup> The

linking of different planes of action using features of landscape has already been commented upon in the Leningrad S.23 caravan scene in Maqāma 4.<sup>34</sup> However, that artist's execution is more fluid and less circumscribing than al-Wāsiṭī's creations. This building-up of planes seems to be innovative in the early 7th/13th century, and it prefigures later Persian painting.

A further point of similarity with the Leningrad S.23 is the compositional device of the plain {sandy} area as a backdrop. The Leningrad S.23 painter used the device to particularly good effect earlier in this Maqāma on page 288,<sup>35</sup> where the light golden interior of the black hair tent highlighted the scene of the action, and he included a similar pale landscape background for the encounter with the village youth on page 293.<sup>36</sup>

Abū Zayd and al-Hārith in their city finery are mounted on handsome camels; it should be noted that the villagers wear similar garments. Both men have dark beards and they look much younger than their usual portrayals; indeed, they are not particularly recognisable in this instance. This is rather surprising, as we are now reading the 43rd Maqāma, and the period of the tales stretches over many years. One elaborate camel saddle with carved wooden mounts can be seen, and both camels are covered with expensive fringed cloths.

The ghulām<sup>37</sup> is not depicted as a youth, but as a mature man with a full beard; nor does he carry the bundle of grass required by the text. He is also dressed in metropolitan-type clothing, whereas a peasant returning from the fields with fodder would surely have worn short practical clothing of the type found in the genre



agricultural scenes in the Paris Pseudo-Galen Kitāb al-Tiryāq of 595/1199 <sup>38</sup> and on metalwork of the period. <sup>39</sup> This perhaps indicates that a boldly-coloured full-length garment was chosen for the impact it would make on the composition. Much of the force of the encounter with al-Hārith and Abū Zayd would have been lost if the man had been largely bare and superimposed upon a plain light background.

A panoramic effect is achieved in the upper register by depicting a series of five vaulted niches as houses and one as a cattle byre. The individual semi-circular vaulted structures are shown to good effect in cross section, and they are solidly built of roughly-hewn stone bound with mortar. There were two methods of stone working. It could be smoothly cut or, as appears to be the case in this illustration, it was left undressed on most of the outer face, but with smooth edges. <sup>40</sup> This technique is known by masons in Mosul as qubbadar. <sup>41</sup> It was popular before the advent of Islam, and it was used in the 7th century B.C. in the walls of Nineveh. <sup>42</sup> Stone was plentiful in northern Iraq, and it was also available in south west Iraq at Shithatha, near al-Ukhaydir. <sup>43</sup> Substantial reserves of gypsum, for use in mortar, were also found in the south west. <sup>44</sup> These archways, whatever they represent, skilfully encapsulate glimpses of village routine and occupations, and any tendency to flatness in the composition has been mitigated to some extent by setting them on a slope.

The wall around the settlement has been constructed of small regular-shaped units, which may be kiln-burnt bricks {ajūrr}. <sup>45</sup> When kiln-fired bricks were combined with quicklime {sarūj}, their

strength was considerably increased,<sup>46</sup> and they would be ideal for a defensive wall. A lime mortar would be used in that instance.<sup>47</sup>

The matronly woman who seems to be arguing with her husband bears a strong resemblance to al-Wāsiṭī's jāriya with the camels on folio 101<sup>48</sup> in Maqāma 32 and she seems to represent a 'type' of middle-aged Arab woman in this manuscript. Two young girls are in an adjoining 'house', while an adolescent girl to the right weeps; they have plump, round faces and are dressed in surprisingly fine garments for a rural scene. The men are typical here. The man at the extreme left and the person with the distaff at the right hand side are enigmatical. The man seems to be concerned with something which is happening outside the composition. He is not part of it and he is a finely-drawn character in his own right. Perhaps he has been appropriated from elsewhere.

One assumes that the person at the right holding a distaff is a woman, even though she seems to be wearing a man's turban. However, the bare leg to the knee would certainly have been considered indecorous for a female outside her home. It might be a plump youth, but women are traditionally associated with the art of spinning; the centre of the woman's domain was "the spindle",<sup>49</sup> and from her endeavours, spinning became an extensive home industry.<sup>50</sup> There seems to be no reason why she should be sitting outside the village wall. A spinning woman appears at the right hand side of Istanbul E.E. 2916 miniature in this tale,<sup>51</sup> which possibly suggests a common source for both artists.

At the extreme right of the composition, a peasant carrying a mattock returns from the fields; he enters the village through an

elaborate vaulted gateway in the defensive wall of the settlement. He too wears fine clothes which are more typical of an urban environment. One wonders whether these garments were chosen for their colourful decorative qualities, as a foil to the dark interiors and rough-hewn masonry; alternatively they were possibly taken over wholesale from other genre sources. Each one of these people is a well-drawn individual, so there is a very strong genre feeling.

A white ox or water buffalo looks out of one of the dark recesses, just above the pond. This is an effective device which lends depth and interest to the composition, and the association of beast and water calls to mind al-Wāsiṭī's al fresco carousing scene in Maqāma 24, where there is a technically-correct illustration of an oxen-driven water wheel. In both of these illustrations the beast faces left, and the water is below it and to the right, and the inference may be that al-Wāsiṭī used the same model twice. A similar stylisation of water can be seen in the ocean in Leningrad S.23.<sup>52</sup> Goats graze by the water-side; their depiction is less satisfactory and more clumsy than that of the camels. Although they and the farmyard fowls which are perched on a vaulted rooftop are a minor theme, they are nevertheless an integral part of the natural setting of the countryside.

While it is not inconceivable that poultry might fly up on roofs, one is reminded here of the birds on the domes of the King's Pavilion in the late 6th/12th century Paris Kitāb al-Tiryaq,<sup>53</sup> as well as in an early 8th/14th century illustration of al-Jazarī's Kitāb fī ma'arifāt al-ḥiyāl al-handasiya in New York.<sup>54</sup> A single

bird sits prominently on a dome in the later Oxford Marsh 458 Maqāmāt manuscript. <sup>55</sup> The conjunction of birds and the mosque in Basra occurs in Istanbul E.E. 2916. <sup>56</sup>

A mosque dominates the left hand side of the upper plane, and it is of stone construction. The surface of the large outer wall blocks is highlighted. The tall corner buttress has a pointed finial and it is constructed in smaller building units. An epigraphic frieze in foliated Kufic script runs the length of the outer wall. The first word is not legible, but the inscription continues, huwa Allāh, "He is God"; this is a common Qur<sup>ā</sup>nic reference which stresses the Oneness of God, and it is a reminder to all that Allāh has no peers. <sup>57</sup> In this type of popular Saljūq Kūfic, foliated motifs grow out of the letters, or from the upper edge of the epigraphic band, <sup>58</sup> and they relieve the otherwise strict angularity of a carved script.

Epigraphic friezes were a prominent architectural feature at that time. <sup>59</sup> In particular, foliated Kūfic inscriptions are found on the minbar of the Jāmi' al-ʿAmādiya, the mihrābs of the tomb of the Imām ʿAbd al-Rahmān and the Jāmi' al-Juwaichati. <sup>60</sup> Al-Wāsiṭī has depicted an epigraphic wall frieze in Maqāma 50, <sup>61</sup> and this feature also appears on the wall of the mosque in Istanbul E.E. 2916 in Maqāma 48; <sup>62</sup> however, both these inscriptions are in naskhī script. Above the frieze in our illustration there are two rows of crenellations with a heart-shaped motif.

The relatively smooth-textured cylindrical minaret shaft {bādan} seems to indicate the brick construction which was the

preferred medium for the Iraqi minaret. <sup>63</sup> Brick sizes varied considerably, <sup>64</sup> and their colours also fluctuated, according to the degree of firing. <sup>65</sup> This latter feature is noticeable in the illustration. Elsewhere, but in particular in Syria, cut stone minarets are found. <sup>66</sup> Two epigraphic bands of floriated Kufic script on a plain background encircle the shaft below the gallery {al-ḥawḍ or al-shurfa}. It was not possible to decipher them. A similar minaret inscription in floriated Kufic occurs in the Basra mosque in Maqāma 50 in the Istanbul E.E. 2916. <sup>67</sup> These two bands of Kūfic are separated by a 'meander' border of a type which is found on the frieze of double engaged pilasters on the mihrāb in the tomb of Imām 'Abd al-Rahmān in Mosul. <sup>68</sup> The same simple pattern also occurs elsewhere in manuscript illumination. <sup>69</sup>

Al-Wāsiṭī's epigraphic minaret frieze is enclosed within a very narrow band; no decoration is discernible from the painting. <sup>70</sup> If al-Wāsiṭī had enclosed his inscription within bands of cable moulding, they would have emphasised the cylindrical nature of the minaret. Alternatively, he could have followed the example of the Istanbul E.E. 2916 artist in Maqāmāt 28 and 50, <sup>71</sup> where the shaft bricks are laid on a diagonal course. Al-Wāsiṭī's minaret is incomplete, for one cannot see the small pointed dome with finial which should crown it.

The base {al-qā'ida} of the minaret is not visible; bases usually took one of three forms, the square, the octagonal and the dodecagonal. <sup>72</sup> If this minaret is Iraqi in inspiration, it is possible that its model was built on the most common, octagonal form <sup>73</sup> of the later 'Abbāsid period, although there was a



transition in plan from the square, through the octagonal to the dodecagonal. Cylindrical minarets with octagonal bases are found in the Jāmi' al-Khaffāfīn in Baghdād, <sup>74</sup> as well as at 'Ana, Sinjar, Arbīl and Daqūq. <sup>75</sup>

The minaret gallery provided a walkway for the mu'adhdhin, and it rests on two rows of muqarnas vaulting. Carved terracotta pieces were used extensively; <sup>76</sup> these were affixed to panels by jūss which was applied only on the back of the pieces, and it is likely that some form of template was applied to the surface of the cut brick shapes before the carving was executed. <sup>77</sup> Examples of terracotta relief are found on the Mustanṣiriya madrasa, the Sharabiya madrasa in Wasiṭ, and the Mirjāniya madrasa. <sup>78</sup>

It is likely that the form of the gallery would resemble the base of the minaret, if only for symmetry. Given the small scale, it is difficult to determine the shape of the balustrade; it seems to be hexagonal, and one wonders if the artist has distorted it to introduce an element of compositional depth, for he had previously misrepresented architectural features to this end. <sup>79</sup>

The main mosque structure is topped by a very large turquoise ribbed dome, {qubba}, <sup>80</sup> with a gilded bulbous finial. The dome represents a major space form, and it creates an impression of monumentality. Perhaps this mosque was built on the domical plan which had spread from Iran in the 6th/12th century. <sup>81</sup> This is a beautiful mosque, of elaborate construction.

Yāqūt points out that there were some villages in Iraq which covered large areas housing a considerable population; one he

describes as a "big village", {qarya kabīra} and another as a "small town" {bulayda}; sometimes he simply says "a town" {balda} and/or a "village like a city" {qarya kā'l-madīna}. <sup>82</sup> Some 'villages' apparently even had a Friday mosque; <sup>83</sup> if this is so then, theoretically, they should have had at least ten thousand adults {mukallafīn} who were obliged to perform the Friday prayer. <sup>84</sup> It is therefore not beyond the realms of possibility that al-Wāsiṭī's village possessed a very fine Friday mosque.

The niches in the miniature call to mind this artist's two domed tombs in Maqāma 11, <sup>85</sup> but they have now been stripped of buttresses and crenellations and are set on different levels. Village stone has also replaced the bricks of the tombs as the building medium, and both illustrations have a tree at the left hand side. A plausible alternative explanation of the miniature is that al-Wāsiṭī's inspiration and model lay in an actual mosque complex with adjoining mausolea, which he adapted to provide both a framework and a backdrop for the human elements. Iraqi mausolea might be free-standing or attached to a mosque. They were a very common architectural feature, and those which have survived represent the bulk of buildings from the period of the Maqāmāt illustrations. <sup>86</sup> They were associated with famous people and were accorded great importance.

We have here a remarkably self-contained community of men, women and children, and their animals and fowls. One must ask

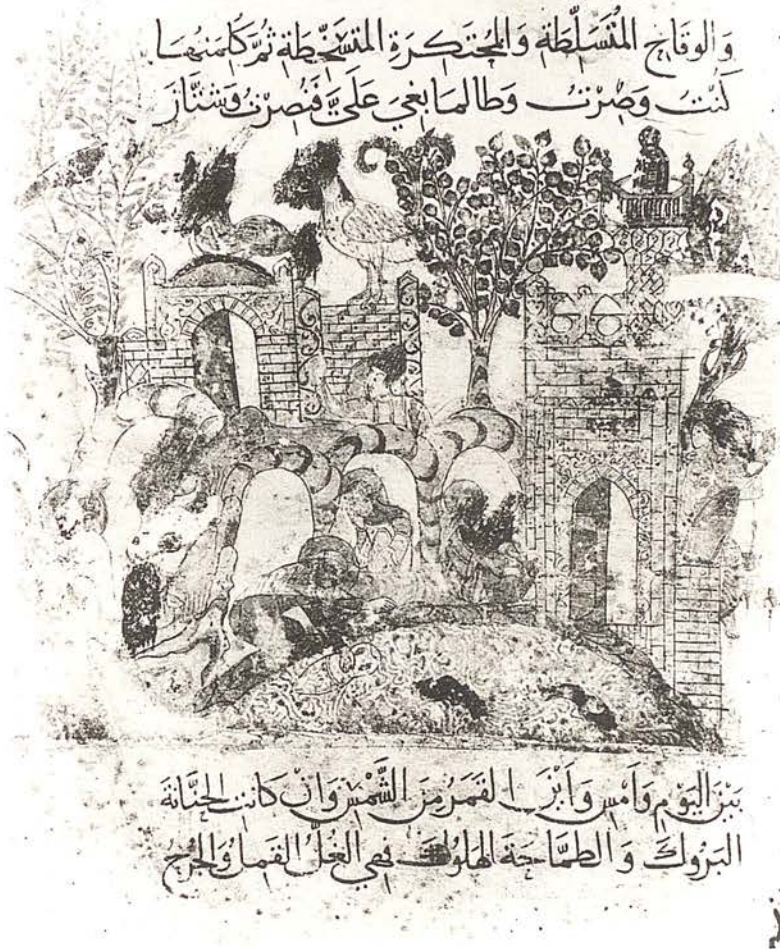
whether it is likely that everyday working folk in a prosperous village would be wearing such fine garments. Their prosperity depended on their industry, and more plebeian clothes would have been in order, as outlined above.<sup>87</sup> One can imagine the complete self-sufficiency of village routine and occupations. All the staples of life are there, that is water, the heavily-laden date palm, the labourer, the lady with her distaff who is central to the home and, most importantly, God.

One should not be too surprised to find that such a pious and hardworking community should have little time for literature, and this delightful scene is perhaps intended to show the bucolic quality of life to a literate urban audience, for the youth in the foreground advised al-Ḥārith and Abū Zayd in metaphorical language that "in their town literature was utterly valueless"<sup>88</sup> and poetry fetched "not a barley-corn, nor prose a breadcrumb".<sup>89</sup> On the other hand, he may have been displaying a hostility that was mutually felt and never far from the surface, because al-Ḥārith had said of the village, "may the good keep aloof from it".<sup>90</sup>

We turn now to the two relevant illustrations in Istanbul E.E. 2916. The text on folio 176 is part of a long dialogue which causes al-Ḥārith to curse Abū Zayd for leaving him "bewildered", and it does not lend itself to illustration. It reads...

"... a spendthrift, and impudent shrew? One grasping and never satisfied? Moreover all her talk is 'I was and have become, erewhile when I was wronged I had given me help, but what a difference between today and yesterday, and where is the moon beside the sun?' {listest thou for her} though she be always bewailing {her former husband} and blest {with adult sons} and withal a bold-faced wanton; she is a collar {around a man's neck} that breeds vermin."<sup>91</sup>

176



One could easily forgive the artist for also being "bewildered". It is interesting to note that this particular text would have been apposite as a caption to the *Wasitī* illustration, where an analysis of the female characters could have been made in

line with it. This seems to be a peculiar juncture of the tale in which to insert a village scene, for there is no mention of "village" in the text which precedes it. Indeed, "village" is not mentioned until some twenty eight lines of Arabic later.<sup>92</sup> Further, the village incident is the penultimate one of several sub-plots in the tale, and the artist has correctly placed another miniature at the requisite point of the maqāma.

Folio 176 has two striking separate gateways with a door ajar to beckon one in and to suggest receding planes. There is clearly a minaret with a wooden gallery inside the perimeter, and its balustrade also appears to be hexagonal in shape. The architecture here is extremely detailed and elaborate. One can make out the muqarnas vaulting of the gallery and the bricks laid off the horizontal to emphasise the cylindrical shape of the minaret. The two gateways are solid and elaborate. One has a large dome, while the other features a crenellated frieze; both have elaborate masonry on the outer face.

Al-Janabī points out that some Iraqi mausolea, especially those unattached to a mosque, could be entered through a vestibule.<sup>93</sup> This was a feature of Saljūq and Ilkhānid domed mausolea,<sup>94</sup> which were of a high rectangular structure, with a monumental entrance facade and a pointed archway.<sup>95</sup> That description applies equally to the village gateways, and these elements were also characteristic of madrasa architecture in Baghdād.<sup>96</sup> The vaulted structures enclose people busy at everyday tasks, as in the Wāsiṭī composition, and again the genre element is successfully captured.



Landscape elements are similarly detailed, and the swirling water of the pool is reminiscent of textile patterns. Two large fish swim in the pool, but there is no indication of its source. Even the two-handled dānn being filled by the woman in the foreground is well drawn and bears incised decoration. There is a figure to the right with a distaff, as in the Wasiti painting, and here it may be a woman in a long robe. All of these have been included at the expense of the omission of al-Hārith and Abū Zayd.

The man at the centre looms from behind the 'rocks' of the vaulting in front of a village gateway. The painter of Istanbul E.E. 2916 is extremely successful in the creation of multiple ground planes, and similar experimentation has also been noted in the Leningrad S.23 caravan in Maqāma 4.<sup>97</sup> These also herald the appearance of the device in later Persian painting.<sup>98</sup>

Unusually for this period, the large tree at the left hand side encroaches into the text; it is delicately executed and decorative, yet in no way obtrusive. This is another aspect which was to be taken up by Persian artists, and it may be a forerunner of a painted background on the folio itself. Al-Wasitī's date palm beside the minaret also encroached beyond the confines of the miniature. There is the notion in Istanbul E.E. 2916 of landscape for its own sake and perhaps beyond textual requirements. Costumes here are not elaborate and are more in line with one's idea of village working clothes; they seem to be relatively plain or striped.

We turn now to the second illustration of this village in Istanbul E.E. 2916. It occurs at the correct place in the text, as

did the Wāsiṭī miniature, where one reads of the encounter with the village lad.

Istanbul Esad Efendi 2916, f.177v:8E8, Mq. 43



Abū Zayd and al-Ḥārith are in the foreground, with the boy pointing to the village, and there is a contrast between the striped utilitarian garment of the youth and the metropolitan robes of the two friends. The same genre elements of domestic fowls and animals and people going about their daily business are present, but it is a much less detailed composition than that on f.176. It is possible that the artist was anxious to give two different impressions of the village and to experiment with his compositions. Grabar points out <sup>99</sup> that there is a difference in character between these two Istanbul E.E. 2916 village miniatures which may suggest that the artist had different models, of variable quality, to work from. This seems to be the only instance in the manuscript where this factor occurs, though in the Leningrad S.23 there are duplications of settings, with minor variations from one image to the other. There is undoubtedly a similarity between the village in these two manuscripts and that in Paris B.N. 5847, and one wonders if perhaps there was a stock model.

From the above analyses, it is clear that the Wāsiṭī and Istanbul E.E. 2916 manuscripts share common features of iconography and composition, at least in this maqāma. It is tempting to suggest that the artist of the Istanbul manuscript copied to some extent directly from al-Wāsiṭī, especially in the light of the highly unusual setting of al-Wāsiṭī's village, and then made his own experiments in exploiting the pictorial space to the fullest extent.

In view of al-Wāsiṭī's originality, his unique position as scribe and illustrator and his going beyond textual requirements on several occasions at least, <sup>100</sup> it would be necessary to choose the

most original Wāsitī compositions and compare them with the Istanbul miniatures in the same tale. One would also have to take account of their place in the text, and this seems to be an area which merits further study.

In all three paintings reproduced, these two artists have chosen disparate elements which, in combination, have successfully brought country living to mind for their urban audience.

### {c} The Bedouin

Maqāmāt 27, 32 and 43 are set within a specifically Bedouin environment and, as they are concerned with admiration of the Bedouin and the purity of their Arabic, this is entirely appropriate. Al-Ḥarīrī stresses the philological importance of Maqāma 27 in particular by appending his own brief commentary, and Maqāma 44 deals additionally with hospitality in a tent afforded to travellers on a winter's night.

Maqāma 43 unfolds in the Ḥaḍramawt, in Yemen, when Abū Zayd tells his friend a very complicated tale of acquiring a fine camel and then losing it, and the point of the story consists of words with double meanings. The finder sought to lay claim to the beast on a subtle play of words; by extension, the terms for cordwainery and camel, for both of which Yemen is renowned, are interchangeable, hence the argument over the meaning of 'mount' and its interpretation as a sandal or a beast. A neutral opinion was sought from an itinerant judge, who ruled that the camel rightfully



belonged to Abū Zayd.

The text above the illustration on folio 288 of the Leningrad S.23 manuscript reads ...

"Then I saw no remedy for my affair, and no way out of my anxiety, but to repair to the judge, {hakam} even though he should cuff me. So we hastened to a shaykh, stoutly erect, with handsome headgear, concerning whom one could perceive that the birds might perch upon him, and that he was not unjust ... " 101

Leningrad, Academy of Science, S.23, p.288:8E3, Mq. 43.





This miniature is therefore in the correct place in relation to the text.

The illustrator has created a framework of black hair tents, {duwār}, to encircle his central theme, which is the explanation of the lost 'mount' by an independent arbiter. Their semi-circular shape conveys exactly the root meaning of the word duwār, which means "he or it circled" <sup>102</sup> and, in addition dār or house is synonymous with tent, for it can mean simply "an abode". <sup>103</sup> The nomads' tents are a departure in this manuscript from the more elaborate and colourful types for merchants which have been seen in, for example, Maqāma 4.

They are an accurate reflection of the term "the people of the hair tents" {ahl al-wabar} in Maqāma 27; <sup>104</sup> that is but one of several expressions for the Bedouin. Ibn al-Athīr explains it as follows:

"{the name} ... is derived from 'camel's hair' because they make their dwellings out of this material." <sup>105</sup>

Tent types have been fully analysed in the earlier section on Trade. It is likely that the strong central pole here has been omitted for compositional reasons; the golden coloured interior background provides a foil to the exterior animal skins, as well as a backdrop for the action in the foreground. The framework of this tent is identical to the that of the tent in Maqāma 26 in Istanbul E.E. 2916, where Abu Zayd lives sumptuously under patronage. <sup>106</sup> It is not clear if one sees two or three tents here, but each one represents a family; these tents are part of an encampment or hayy. <sup>107</sup> Members of the hayy form a qawm or clan, and a number of

kindred clans then constitute a tribe {qabīla}.<sup>108</sup> The inclusion of camels is not unexpected in the context of an encampment and it underscores the dependency of their owners upon them. They also constitute a genre element. 'Umar, the Rashīdūn Caliph reportedly said "The Arab prospers only where the camel prospers"<sup>109</sup>, and this point is exemplified by the fact that the Arabic language is said to include some one thousand names for the camel, which encompass the stages of growth of the numerous breeds.<sup>110</sup>

Depth is hinted at by the figures of people and camels between the tents and by internal tent poles {which are not visible}. The semi-circular shapes are countered by the upward thrust of six spears, which also create an illusion of depth, and the plain colours of the robes against a golden sandy background satisfactorily tie in the whole composition. For example, the red robes pick up a red pattern in the carpet and the sleeve linings of the middle figure. The same device has been employed to link the face-veil, carpet and cushion, as well as the plain blue robe.

On this occasion the artist has almost dispensed with the halo, but it has been used to effect to distinguish the dark head covering and veil of the woman at the left hand side who stands between the black tents, and it echoes the golden tent interior. This woman may belong to the family in the background, or perhaps she has made herself scarce from her own home, in the foreground, on account of the presence of strangers. In any event, she is guaranteed anonymity by her veil, and family honour is duly satisfied. The description in the Encyclopaedia of Islam of a burqu<sup>1</sup> accords perfectly with the veil in the miniature, for it is described as

"a harness-like affair consisting of fabric suspended from the centre front of the headband {'isāba}, to cover the face. The lower corners of the burqu' were attached to the sides of the headband by a string creating a mask-like effect." <sup>111</sup>

The modern version in the Gulf states is made of leather and dyed an iridescent bluish colour.

The artist has apparently portrayed a judge {qādi}. He sits on a wooden carpet-covered dais with a large richly-patterned cushion at his back and he holds the sandal which the defendant argues is a 'mount'. His platform has straight legs, and not the heavily turned and carved variety which one has already noted, for example, on London B.L. 1200 and Istanbul E.E. 2916 judges' chairs or thrones. One might question the plausibility of the wooden dais in a tent, as it is hardly portable, although the cushion and rug are in order. The material of the bolster features brocade tirāz bands, leaf tendrils and a pattern resembling a cross-tile within hexagons which is also noted elsewhere in the Maqāmāt in Istanbul E.E. 2916, <sup>112</sup> in Paris B.N. arabe 5847, <sup>113</sup> and Paris B.N. arabe 3929. <sup>114</sup> Cruciform designs also occur on 6th/12th and 7th/13th Persian lustreware <sup>115</sup> and in an early 8th/14th century Shāh-nāma. <sup>116</sup>

There is a striking parallel in this portrait of a judge with that of a doctor and his assistant in the Freer Gallery, Washington, Dioscorides medical manuscript where, incidentally, hexagons and crosses feature on the carpet. <sup>117</sup> However, the classical origin of the iconographic theme is almost completely overshadowed now by the pastoral setting, for the bookstand has gone and the judge holds the sandal, as the text requires.

A white taylasān trails over his shoulders and dark robe; it is attached to the judge's brown turban and indicates that this is a person of some substance. This impression is reinforced by his pose, the dais and the textiles, and the artist has captured something of the judge's dignified demeanour from the Hadīth alluded to in the caption, <sup>118</sup> which in turn reminds one of the saying of a Hamāsa poet,

"As though the birds had settled on their heads, no fear of violence, but the awe inspired by majesty." <sup>119</sup>

Grabar suggests that one sees a peripatetic qādī here and that this rendering of the theme is "the only original treatment" vis-à-vis other illustrators. <sup>120</sup> This is true to the extent that he has set a judgment scene in a black, animal-hair tent. Ettinghausen also uses the term "judge", <sup>121</sup> and other illustrators of this scene have chosen to depict a figure of authority on a throne, who does not wear a taylasān. <sup>122</sup> These points all confirm that there were already in existence stereotyped models of authority and gravitas available for adaptation by the Maqāmāt artists, in other words, cultural clichés in the form of authors, doctors, government officials and the like.

However, the term hakam and not qādī appears in the text; <sup>123</sup> the Qāmūs and Tāj al-ʿArūs describe hakam both as "judge", and "a man advanced in age", <sup>124</sup> that is, a venerable old man. Shaykh appears also in the first line of text above the miniature, and I believe that it is used here as a courtesy term for an old,

and by definition, wise man of the tribe who was well-versed in local custom and practice {ʿurf}, who would in ordinary circumstances be called in to arbitrate in matters of personal dispute and tribal interest.<sup>125</sup> In Abū Zayd's case, a professional judge with all the trappings of office would hardly be consulted to explain difficult terminology, albeit within the context of theft. There is a peripatetic judge in Paris B.N. arabe 3465 Kalīla wa Dimna who is passing sentence on an accused.<sup>126</sup> Although that illustration is rendered in the stylised manner of the Paris B.N. arabe 6094, it is nevertheless an outdoor scene devoid of the trappings of the courtroom.

Two Bedouin outside our black hair tents wear their turbans in desert fashion, with the ends tied under the chin; this would keep out stinging, blowing sand. Bedouin appear elsewhere in the Maqāmāt, as we have seen in crowds, as well as in Maqāma 32, and these two resemble a pair of horsemen in the Istanbul Ahmet III Kitāb al-Bayṭara, or Book of Farriery, which was executed in Baghdād in 606/1210.<sup>127</sup>

However, even bearing in mind that al-Ḥārith was not a true nomad and might still be wearing his town clothes, the elaborate robes with ṭirāz bands of the foreground figures and the lightweight trousers {sarāwil} may be fanciful in this particular location. Although the figures and poses represent an adaptation of existing models, the colours and drapery folds are deliberately employed to counteract the hatched drabness of the tents and the plain backgrounds, and are



repeated to tie in the whole composition, as mentioned above.

It is true that, as a rule, Bedouin costume and that of the urban dweller, except among the poorest, differed considerably; <sup>128</sup> generally speaking, and of expediency, nomads' clothing would be of the simplest and, unlike high metropolitan fashion, Bedouin dress has remained fairly constant for a long period of time. <sup>129</sup>

A more realistic mode of dress for males in a desert setting would have been the kisā', which was generally woollen and was used as a wrapper and a blanket in the cooler seasons. <sup>130</sup> It was much in use among men and women in the general populace, and the Kitāb al-Aghānī mentions it particularly in regard to the Bedouin. <sup>131</sup> Also common to men and women was the 'abā'', which the Tāj al-'Arūs defines as

"a well-known sort of woollen garment of the kind called kisā', in which are {generally} stripes; and said to be a jubba of wool." <sup>132</sup>

Dozy confirms that this was a characteristic garment of the Bedouin, made from coarse cloth or wool of different colours. <sup>133</sup> Such garb would be fairly basic, practical and eminently compatible with the ecology.

The illustration reinforces the element of repetition which one associates with the Leningrad S.23 artist, in the appropriation of conventional models, either compositional or architectural. However, the 'architecture' on this occasion is original, and a departure from the decorative and elaborate tents which we have already seen here in the caravanserai in Maqāma 4 <sup>134</sup> and which occur in general throughout Maqāmāt

manuscripts.

Maqāma 32 finds al-Ḥārith travelling en route from the pilgrimage to Tayba, which is one of the names for Medina, to visit the tomb of the Prophet. He is yet again, as he was in the 11th tale, mindful of the Prophet and his example, for there is an allusion here to a reported Tradition which runs,

"He who performs the pilgrimage, and visits me not,  
wrongs me." <sup>135</sup>

In the homestead of the Banū Ḥarb, al-Ḥārith encounters Abū Zayd in the guise of a juriconsult {faqīh}, gravely pronouncing on the "decisions on ambiguous legal questions" posed by the spokesman for the tribe; al-Ḥārīrī alluded to these in his Preface. <sup>136</sup> Each of the one hundred questions posed to the 'expert' on laws of religious ritual contained at least one double entendre. The questions are pertinent, bearing in mind that al-Ḥārith has just completed the pilgrimage, for he and the assembly perhaps are still fired with religious zeal. The real literary purpose of this very long tale is to illustrate proverbs and rare words in the Bedouin vocabulary.

The illustration appears early on in the maqāma, on folio 85; it is correctly placed in relation to the text, which reads,

"'Verily, I am the legist of the Arabs of the Arabians, and the most learned of those that live under the star-pocked sky.' Then there stalked up to him a man glib of tongue, stout of heart, saying: 'Know, that I have had converse with the legists of the world to the effect that I have selected from them a hundred decisions, and if thou be one of those who loathe the daughters of others {meaning lies, untruth, falsehood}, and desire from us sound food, then listen and answer, so that thou mayest get thee thy

The caption in large thuluth script advises the reader that this is

"The picture of Abū Zayd and the Arab who questions him."

Paris, B.N. arabe 3929, f.85:6F5, Mq. 32.



The small sprightly Abū Zayd is seated on a cushion at the right hand side of the composition. One reads that he had

"... donned the turban in the orthodox fashion and gathered his garment in proper style, and was sitting crosswise, while the great ones of the clan surrounded him, and their medley enwrapped him from all sides." 138

There is of course no crowd, although the two grave Bedouin are larger than Abū Zayd, and this could be a compositional device to suggest a greater company.

Abū Zayd readily takes up the challenge, and he sits confidently expounding. His hand gestures indicate that he is carrying on a spirited conversation with one of the Bedouin, with an element of give and take. Abū Zayd carries a staff, which confirms his peripatetic role, for we know that it was one of the "appurtenances" of the itinerant pilgrim, as defined by al-Sharīshī. 139

In four of the tales there is mention of a prescribed way of sitting for men, when there was nothing to lean against, and Steingass describes the Bedouin method of sitting at ease as follows,

"They drew their knees to their bodies, and kept them in that position, either by knitting their hands before them, or holding a sword in front, or tying them with some improvised sash to the back." 140

It is evidently a comfortable way of sitting, for it is forbidden during the khuṭba, as it is conducive to sleep. 141

Both tribesmen sit on similar cushions; they are distinguishable by their turbans worn in Bedouin fashion, namely tied under the chin. The chief nomad wears a dark, heavy robe with a trefoil pattern; his companion, like Abū

Zayd, wears an unpatterned garment. All the robes bear ṭirāz bands, although no epigraphy is discernible.

It may be that garments bearing this embellishment are rather unlikely outside the metropolitan environment; the patterned robe serves to draw attention to the questioner and suggests that the colours and designs of textiles here were also regarded as important compositional 'markers'.

The Bedouin "glib of tongue, stout of heart" <sup>142</sup> is brown-skinned, as befits a senior tribesman who has had long exposure to the desert sun. He is distinguished looking and entirely credible as a man who had conversed "with the legists {fuqahā'} of the world". His companion is fair, like Abū Zayd. Perhaps the fair man is meant to be al-Ḥārith, in Bedouin garb, and his paleness emphasises the skin tones of the nomad who set the legal questions.

The bearded middle-aged man with a 'top-knot' seems to be based on an Indian model. Although he wears Arab clothing, he does not have a turban and so presumably is not a Muslim. He reminds one of the wālī in al-Wāsiṭī's illustration of the childbirth scene in Maqāma 39, <sup>143</sup> and he represents a transformation of this painter's usual youthful, pig-tailed attendant, <sup>144</sup> of court scenes, the ghulām. The artist may have borrowed him from royal iconography; this also ties in with the relatively large size of the two Bedouin.

Both of the Arabs carry swords, and this is another example of the extremely literal interpretation of the text by this artist. As their name indicates, the Banū Harb was a



fierce tribe, and they "had just returned from the war" {harb}. <sup>145</sup> Harb in its root meaning, according to the Qāmūs, has connotations of plunder and despoliation of wealth and property. <sup>146</sup>

The ghazw or raid lay at the base of the economic structure of pastoral society <sup>147</sup> and al-Qutāmī the early Umayyad poet outlined the guiding principle of such life thus,

"Our business is to make raids on the enemy, on our neighbour and on our own brother, in case we find none to raid but a brother!" <sup>148</sup>

Plunder was considered the prerogative of Bedouin raids <sup>149</sup> and it may be that the social and economic conditions of a harsh life in the desert elevated the raid to something of a national institution in Bedouin eyes.

A reference is made in Maqāma 49 to gharāt or what Preston describes as "excursions made by Bedouin for the purpose of plunder" and these, too, were considered to be chivalrous exploits and not flagrant attacks. <sup>150</sup> Along with the virtues of al-muruwwa or manliness, and ḥamāsa, fortitude and enthusiasm, raiding was considered by the Bedouin to be one of the three supreme virtues. <sup>151</sup> It seems to have assumed the status almost of a sacred duty in the face of a hostile environment.

Even a 13th/19th century writer, discussing a Shaykhs' Market {Sūq al-Shuyūkh} states that

"no inconsiderable portion of their gains is derived from the purchases of plundered goods brought in from the desert by the Bedouin." <sup>152</sup>

It has been suggested that during the contemporary Saljūq

period in Iraq the Bedouin played a somewhat anarchic role.<sup>153</sup> Then, as today, there were stages of quasi-urbanity and semi-nomadism, seemingly with no great line of demarcation.<sup>154</sup> Tribesmen frequently raided the western side of Baghdād, and sometimes even the northern areas of east Baghdād.<sup>155</sup> Districts and towns were often illegally annexed through warfare<sup>156</sup> and such action may well have contributed to Baghdād's shifting mediaeval population, and explain the variety of ethnic features of the characters in the Maqāmāt miniatures.

Yāqūt's observations confirm the desolate state of some parts of the city at that time, the early 7th/13th century.<sup>157</sup> Therefore, however much al-Hārith's high regard and motives would be well understood by the reader, it may be that admiration for the Bedouin was not universal in the period, for al-Dūrī says that from his source material "we learn that the urban population usually espoused the cause of the rural population" and that, in some cases, they both stood together against the Bedouin.<sup>158</sup>

Unusually for this artist, he has provided a ground line, in the form of cushions, although they are expected in the Bedouin context; they do underscore his practice of placing the characters in rows. There is also the suggestion of the presence of a figure of some importance, through their association with enthronement scenes. However, as is his wont, the artist has literally portrayed Abū Zayd as himself and so he has missed an opportunity to inject some humour into the

situation by having him seated incongruously on a throne. One might compare this painter's tavern scene in the 12th tale, on folio 34v, <sup>159</sup> where Abū Zayd is carousing in the tavern, sitting on a similar cushion and without a throne; that scene **was** appropriated from the royal repertory, because it represented the only model available for a drinking scene in convivial surroundings.

The flat foreground is counterbalanced and a sense of depth indicated by feet and robes protruding over the edge of cushions, and also by the smaller attendant, who dovetails in to the side and behind a foreground figure.

A proud Bedouin boast is that they have turbans instead of diadems, tents instead of walls, swords instead of bulwarks and poems instead of written laws. <sup>160</sup> These have been demonstrated in the text and illustrations, and the emphasis on rhetoric and philology explains Bedouin munificence at the end of this tale, when Abū Zayd is well rewarded for his erudition with the gift of a female singer and a fine herd of camels. One sees here the reverse side of the coin of the principle of raiding, namely al-diyāfa, or hospitality, which is dealt with extensively in a Bedouin context elsewhere, in Maqāma 44, and which mitigates the harshness of life in a nomadic environment.

These Maqāmāt afford the reader some insight into the values and traditions of the Bedouin, which persist up to the present day. A modern reader might well identify with the world-weary al-Ḥārith in seeking respite from his constant travels and business dealings when, in Maqāma 27, he relates

how he was inclined

"in the prime of my past life to make my residence among the people of the desert, in order to acquire their high-minded temperament [and their {pure dialect of the} Arabian language]." 161

This is proof of the applicability of the content of many of the Maqāmat to readers over the centuries. Freya Stark's accounts of her travels in the Near East earlier this century reveal how traditional and simple life had remained. Today's traveller in the Middle East can still see the black tents, although in sadly-depleted numbers. But traditional values endure, and the qualities for which the Bedouin are rightly famous, and their successful adaptation in differing circumstances, have played a major part in the flourishing of Islām.

\*\*\*\*\*

## CHAPTER 7

### WOMEN IN THE MAQAMAT

#### {a} The Virtuous Wife

Women are illustrated in several manuscripts in fourteen of the Maqāmāt; <sup>1</sup> they are mentioned in nine stories, including four where they act as Abū Zayd's accomplice and they form part of a larger genre scene in five tales, although they are not specifically referred to. <sup>2</sup> Further, they are crucial to the plots of two other Maqāmāt, <sup>3</sup> as flights of fancy on Abū Zayd's part.

Maqāma 5 is set in Kūfa, and it provides yet another excuse for Abū Zayd to exercise all the powers of his imagination. One evening, "when the gloom of night had thus drawn its curtain", <sup>4</sup> al-Ḥārith and a group of companions, "who had been nourished on the milk of eloquence", <sup>5</sup> heard a knock at the door. A stranger was seeking hospitality, and he so intrigued the party "by the sweetness of his language and delivery" <sup>6</sup> that they invited him inside; a candle was lit to reveal Abū Zayd.



Abū Zayd recounted an earlier occasion when he had unsuccessfully sought hospitality, when the child who had answered the door told him that his father, who had been "one of the nobles of Sarūj and Ghasān" <sup>7</sup> had deserted his mother in pregnancy, and they were now very poor.

Al-Wasitī's second illustration for this tale correctly illustrates Abū Zayd's arrival at that house, while the young boy recites the following verses, which appear on four lines above the illustration. The lad mentions Abraham, who is credited with ordaining the rites of hospitality, <sup>8</sup> but explains apologetically that all he can offer is good conversation and a bed.

"For how should we to guests impart a meal,  
While thus the pangs of want our slumber steal,  
Or bounty toward the indigent display,  
While hunger thus consumes our bones away,  
How seems to thee my offer? Speak and say!" <sup>9</sup>

Abū Zayd's reply, and the child's response, which comprise the two lines below the miniature, read ...

"{And I replied}, 'What can I do with an empty house,  
And a host who is himself thus utterly destitute?  
But what is thy name, boy? for thy intelligence charms  
me'.  
He replied, 'My name is Zayd, and I was reared at Fayd,  
And I came to this town yesterday with my kindred of Banī  
'Abs'.  
And I said, 'Give me {yet further explanation ... }'." <sup>10</sup>



Abū Zayd realised that he had arrived at the house of his erstwhile wife, and he was delighted that this child, his son, had inherited all his powers of eloquence. The little boy is well clad in outdoor clothing which is identical in style to the garments of an adult male. In an indoors genre scene he seems

overdressed.

Abū Zayd's wife sits spinning beneath an elaborate, pale blue cusped archway. This arch is decorated with the type of loose floral arrangements which are more generally found as foreground landscape elements in some of the 7th/13th century Maqāmāt miniatures.<sup>11</sup> At the centre of each spandrel there is a large golden rosette or shamsa of the type found in Qur'ans to mark the pause {juz'} when reading.<sup>12</sup> A very decorative pair of heavy brocade curtains is draped above the spinner; they feature a gold vegetal design on a dark field. It is quite possible that they were manufactured at Wāsiṭ, which produced the best type of wall and window curtain,<sup>13</sup> as well as tapestry-woven carpets.<sup>14</sup>

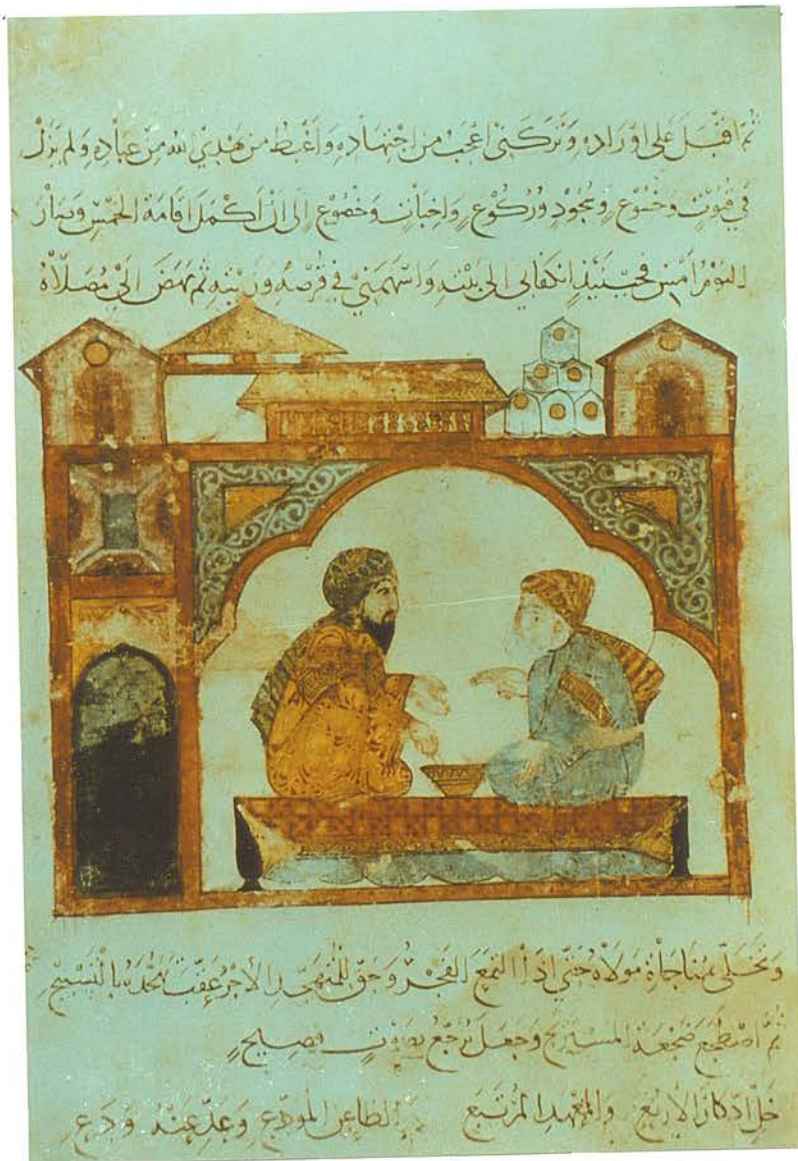
The woman sits on a shallow brick dais which is covered by a dark rug with a roundel design at the edge of the border. A lighter gold-coloured drape has been thrown over the rug, and its folds are sharply delineated. However, it conforms neither to a tapestry-woven carpet nor to a conventional woven rug, for it has the look and texture of clothing fabric, and suggests a degree of opulence.

This is a commodious house, with a pyramid shaped roof 'dome'; this may be executed in woven matting which could be rolled back, or with small roof tiles which are laid in a chevron pattern like those in al-Wāsiṭī's open slave market building.<sup>15</sup> If the material is matting, it is likely that the house is in an area where little rain falls. We later see a similar domestic roof on al-Wāsiṭī's merchant's house in Sinjār in Maqāma 18.<sup>16</sup> Above the entrance portal there is a three-tiered crenellation of

geometrical form which may be cut brick or terracotta.

The three-tiered mugarnas dome {al-mil} <sup>17</sup> with clerestory windows is identical to that in Maqāma 50 here, reproduced below for comparison only; its 'dome' slides back on wheels and it has, in addition, a pair of roof wind-vents.

Paris B.N. arabe 5847, f.166:9F5, Mg. 50.





Al-Wāsitī has also included a pair of handsome muqarnas domes on the palace on the exotic island on folio 120v, which is reproduced in the analysis of the childbirth scene in the 39th tale.<sup>18</sup> A smaller muqarnas dome, without lights, occurs on the house in Paris B.N. 6094 in this tale.<sup>19</sup>

Muqarnas elements of varying shapes and purposes were found throughout Islamic lands, and in Syria and Egypt the motif was generally carved in stone or wood.<sup>20</sup> An early 7th/13th-century example of muqarnas work embellished the portal to the Damascus citadel,<sup>21</sup> and the porch of the Zahirīyya madrasa in Damascus was similarly decorated.<sup>22</sup> The late 'Abbāsid mausoleum of Sitt Zubayda in Baghdād is famous for its conical brick muqarnas dome,<sup>23</sup> while the tomb of Imām Yahya in Mosul, built in 1229, features an interior muqarnas dome.<sup>24</sup> Iraqi muqarnas domes of the period were executed in brick or stone and of geometrical form.<sup>25</sup>

Muqarnas domes were therefore highly visible elements of the architectural landscape of the period, and in this instance the dome may form a vault over a long corridor,<sup>26</sup> such as that surrounding the courtyard of al-Madrasa al-Sharabiyya which was opened in Baghdad in 632/1234.<sup>27</sup> The house as portrayed is surprising, considering the circumstances of the poor deserted wife and child.

A similar red wooden roof balustrade occurs later here, in the school on folio 148v in Maqāma 46.<sup>28</sup> At the spinner's right there is a storage niche containing two tapered stemmed vessels, which are apparently of decorated glass; this niche also



contains a large metal candle stand on a pedestal foot, similar in type to that in a Dioscorides De Materia Medica manuscript of 621/1224.<sup>29</sup> Although the text requires a lighted candle, and indeed the other manuscripts stress the light, no candle is visible here. Flames, and more particularly, a lighted fire, are metaphors for hospitality. For example, in Maqāma 48 Abū Zayd told his audience of a time when "my flint refused to give sparks",<sup>30</sup> viz., when he was "indigent and unable to be bountiful"<sup>31</sup> and later in the same speech he made a well-known allusion to hospitality and fire.<sup>32</sup> The empty candlestick in this instance might thus be a metaphor for the lack of hospitality on offer.

Open niches or built-in storage cupboards for household utensils seem to have been fairly common in the Islamic world.<sup>33</sup> These might be decorated, as in the example in the miniature, where it is not clear whether they are of terracotta or carved wood. Above this niche and the entrance at which Abū Zayd stands are large panels. These panels are presumably wooden and they are deeply cut and bevelled with an ogee design and a repetition of the heart-shaped leaf motifs which occurred elsewhere.<sup>34</sup> Decorative terracotta plaques are inset; these were affixed with jīss, which was applied only to the back,<sup>35</sup> and there are no visible joints. Al-Janabī says that the use of such terracotta ornamentation was centred in Baghdād in Saljūq times.<sup>36</sup>

This structure appears to be the reception hall of the house, and the decorated outer surfaces represent its prestigious

'face'.<sup>37</sup> Similar illustrations for houses appear elsewhere in the Maqāmat manuscripts,<sup>38</sup> and they may give an accurate impression of the houses of the bourgeoisie in the Arab world in the mediaeval period, for a Cairo Geniza document describes a reception hall in a well-to-do family home in Fustāt in the following terms,

"One reception hall is long; its walls are of marble and it has two passages panelled with carved wood, each of which has a door leading to an adjacent 'cabinet' {in Arabic *kumm*, literally a sleeve, thus the reception hall has two cabinets attached to it, very much like the Roman house}." <sup>39</sup>

Such a wealth of architectural detail in no way overshadows Abū Zayd's wife in her central role as a spinner. This has been emphasised by her large size, when she is compared with the slight figures of Abū Zayd and the child, and also by her very dark robe which, in the context, one might reasonably expect to be light, flowing and comfortable for the privacy of her home.

Spinners held the distaff in the left hand, or under the left arm or fastened in a girdle.<sup>40</sup> Abū Zayd's wife has adopted this latter practice. The fibres were twisted or drawn out with the right hand and then attached to the spindle.<sup>41</sup> The spindle was revolved rapidly, and its speed was controlled by a small wheel fitted to its lower extremity.<sup>42</sup> Abū Zayd's wife is also shown spinning in the Leningrad S.23 manuscript, where the position of the wheel and the distaff also bear out the standard use of the implements.<sup>43</sup>

The Prophet said,

"Sitting for an hour employed with the distaff is better for women than a year's worship; and for every piece of cloth woven of the thread spun by them they shall

receive the reward of a martyr." 44

and 'Ā'isha said

"Tell the women what I say: There is no woman who spins until she hath clothed herself but all the angels in the Seven Heavens pray for forgiveness of her sins; and she will go forth from her grave on the day of judgement wearing a robe of Paradise and with a veil upon her head..." 45

Abū Zayd's wife is aptly called Barra. Among the Arabs, Barra is a celebrated woman's name, 46 and she was the sister of Tamīm. 47 Another Barra was an ancestress of the Quraysh, to whom the Prophet's clan was affiliated. 48 Abū Zayd may seek to imply that his wife was of noble birth, and a commodious house would be in keeping with her status. Naturally, the implication must be that he, too, was of good lineage.

However, one is immediately struck by the incongruity between the tenor of the child's speech and al-Wāsiṭī's elaborate miniature. There is certainly an emphasis on the successful struggle of a deserted woman to bring up and educate a son, but there may also be an element of humour on the part of the artist.

This idea of women being at the centre of the home finds parallels elsewhere in the Near East, for in the Jewish tradition, spinning was among the virtues of the celebrated Old Testament "woman of worth" whose price was "far above rubies". 49 One wonders why Abū Zayd's intelligent audience did not question why he deserted such an obvious treasure, and they were clearly mesmerised by his eloquence.

The twin themes of spinning and virtue also appear in the

Annunciation scene in al-Biruni's later Athār al-Bāqīya manuscript in Edinburgh, where Mary is shown with a distaff. <sup>50</sup> Both al-Wasitī's Barra and Mary have extremely broad, oriental and non-Semitic faces. Annunciation scenes depict Mary spinning, <sup>51</sup> and spinning women also appear in genre scenes in Persian manuscripts. <sup>52</sup>

Throughout the ages women and spinning have been closely associated through myth with the fate of mankind <sup>53</sup> and the great goddesses became mistresses of the destinies they created according to their will. <sup>54</sup> For example, the Hittite Ishtar and the Syrian Atargatis were two goddesses who carried distaffs. <sup>55</sup> Abū Zayd's wife undoubtedly has been aptly portrayed as a woman who is firmly in control of the destiny of herself and her child, and who has no need of her deserting husband.

It may come as no surprise to the viewer that she is a figment of our hero's imagination.

#### {b} Childbirth.

Maqāma 39 finds al-Ḥārith and Abū Zayd taking refuge during a storm on an island in the Arabian Gulf, while they are en route from Ṣuḥār in Oman to an unspecified destination. Although a sea voyage was considered dangerous, al-Ḥārith found it preferable on this occasion to an overland route, for he was encumbered by a large

quantity of merchandise. The pair decided to leave the ship and seek provisions on land, and in due course they arrived at a large palace, whose owner was described by one of his slaves as

"The lord of this castle {shāh} ... the pole-star of this place, and the shāh of this territory." <sup>56</sup>

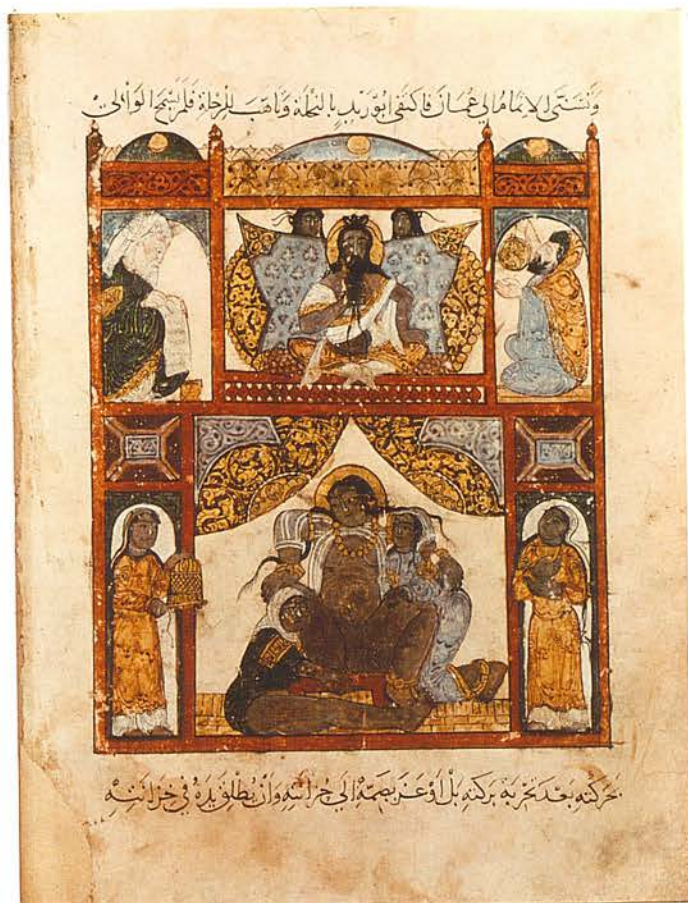
Al-Harīrī may have used the Persian shāh <sup>57</sup> in order to conjure up an initial image of the mysterious East, for towards the end of the tale the ruler is merely referred to in Arabic as the wālī. <sup>58</sup> The shāh and his household are distraught, and fears are expressed for the outcome of his pregnant wife's complicated delivery.

Al-Wāsiṭī shows a bold interior view of the palace on folio 122; strictly speaking, the illustration should have come before this juncture, for the text clearly indicates that the birth has already taken place. The Arabic above and below the miniature reads ...

" ... and our voyage to Oman became easy. Abū Zayd was contented with the largesse received, and prepared for departure; the wālī however, would not allow him to move after he had experienced his blessing, but bade him enrol in his household, so that his hand might make free with his treasures." <sup>59</sup>

The miniature follows.





The ruler's wife is "labouring in the throes of a difficult child-birth".<sup>60</sup> Help was at hand, however, for Abū Zayd advised a sorrowing retainer,

"Be still, O such a one, and of good cheer, and receive news of joy and proclaim them, for I possess a spell for childbirth, the fame of which is spread abroad amongst mankind."<sup>61</sup>

We find Abū Zayd in a small anteroom at the top of the composition writing his spell, and there are two anomalies here relating to the text, viz. he is not in "tattered garments", <sup>62</sup> neither is he writing on a piece of ambergris, {zabad bahrī}. <sup>63</sup> Al-Wāsitī may have modelled Abū Zayd on a scribal figure. This would restore his credibility in the eyes of the reader, when considering that his earlier eloquent "spell for travellers" <sup>64</sup> for their safe voyage had proved totally ineffective.

Scribes or secretaries appear elsewhere in 7th/13th-century Iraqi manuscripts; for example in the Leningrad S.23 Maqāmāt, there is a scribe in the court at Sa'da. <sup>65</sup> Munkar and Nakīr, the two 'Recording Angels', can be seen busily engaged writing down someone's deeds or misdeeds in the Munich version of al-Qazwīnī's 'Aja'ib al-Makhlūqāt, {The Wonders of Creation} made in Wāsit, <sup>66</sup> and scribes are also found in the Istanbul Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā {The Epistles of the Sincere Brethren}. <sup>67</sup>

Abū Zayd ostentatiously writes out this second spell in a saffron solution on a piece of ambergris, <sup>68</sup> which was to be tied to the woman's thigh with a shred of silk after perfuming it with ambergris {zabad bahrī}, in accordance with Arab practice. <sup>69</sup> Some of the earliest Islamic medical manuscripts established the connection between medicine and the occult. For example, in 'Alī ibn Sahl al-Ṭabarī's mid-3rd/9th century Firdaws al-Hikma {Paradise of Wisdom}, he said,

"If you put a magnetic stone into the hand of a woman in labour, it will help her in a difficult birth." <sup>70</sup>

This seems to be a reiteration of a recommendation by Hippocrates,

who mentioned a lodestone,<sup>71</sup> and sympathetic remedies seem especially to have been practised in midwifery. Several further remedies are found in the 4th/10th-century Kitāb al-ḥabala wa'l-aṭfāl, by al-Baladī, which was an extensive book on pregnancy and the care of infants.<sup>72</sup> For example, al-Baladī recommends the following, "A snake-skin wound around the hips of the woman accelerates the birth".<sup>73</sup>

This appears to be a reference to ophiomancy, which is mentioned in Parsi-Persian omen calendars such as the Būrj-nāma and the Mār-nāma dating from the late 10th/16th and early 11th/17th centuries.<sup>74</sup> Abū Zayd's instruction, therefore, seems to be entirely appropriate in the context.

An illustration in the Turcoman style in the British Library, Or. 3299, Miftah ul-Fuḍalā' which probably dates from the early 10th/16th century shows a talisman being prepared with saffron.<sup>75</sup> Abū Zayd also cautioned that no menstruating woman {ḥā'id} should touch the amulet.<sup>76</sup> Perhaps he sought to emphasise his power by bestowing religious sanction on his spell in his allusion to the proscription on menstruating women touching the Holy Qur'ān,<sup>77</sup> on account of being in a ritually impure state.

Al-Ḥārith sits at the top right hand side of the composition consulting his astrolabe for three things, viz., questions {masā'il} concerning the soon to be born child; the selection of a propitious moment for the midwife to deliver the baby, and the foretelling of the baby's future.<sup>78</sup> Astrolabes were in use before the advent of Islām,<sup>79</sup> and they were of three kinds, of which the flat type in the illustration [sathī or musatṭa] was the most common.<sup>80</sup> Al-

Ḥārith's model appears to be correct in size, material {brass} and components, if one compares a 6th/12th-century Saljūq example, a 7th/13th-century Andalusian model, and a 7th/13th-century Egyptian type.<sup>81</sup> These are all somewhat wider than a handspan,<sup>82</sup> and they were obviously kept suspended by a long cord {'ilāqa}<sup>83</sup> fixed to the heavy ring {urw or habb} at the top.<sup>84</sup> Suspension would protect their intricate moving parts, namely the revolving dials and plates on the front and two clock-type hands on the reverse. Each ring was engraved with symbols and Arabic letters, and the outer rim, {hajra or tawq}<sup>85</sup> which could be rotated, had gradations from 0° - 360°; this allowed calculations involving the earth and the planets. It is likely that all these components moved in conjunction with each other, after one had chosen a fixed point as the basis of the calculation.

Hippocrates was of the opinion that ...

"Astronomy does not contribute the smallest part to medicine, but the greatest one, indeed."<sup>86</sup>

and he imposed three tasks upon the physician, viz., "Declaring the past, diagnosing the present, foretelling the future".<sup>87</sup> But the first and second points brought the doctor, and the third one also the astrologer, into conflict with the Sharī'a, for the Hellenistic concept of cause and effect seemed to pose a danger to the concept of Divine Providence.<sup>88</sup>

The intellectual view of medicine being enacted on the upper storey of this palace is reinforced by the term used for a physician, ḥakīm, with its connotations of wisdom.<sup>89</sup> and a visual confirmation of this is found as an annotation in the Paris Kalīla

wa Dimna, where al-hakīm is written above the figure of the doctor who has been summoned by the king to heal the sick princess. <sup>90</sup> Further evidence of the intellectual quality of the medical practitioner occurs in the Paris Pseudo-Galen Kitāb al-Tiryaq B.N. arabe 2964 dated 595/1199, where the physician is invariably shown seated with a book, and a pupil, or in the pensive pose of a philosopher, almost as if to confirm that the messy business of touching the patient was beneath his dignity. <sup>91</sup>

The inclusion of Abū Zayd and al-Hārith thus occupied in the context of a palace reflects an account by Yūsuf ibn Ibrāhīm, an astronomical calculator, who said that in the early Islamic period 'Umm Ja'far had a special conference room in her palace reserved for the astronomical calculators and the physicians, <sup>92</sup> and this suggests the interdependence of medicine and astrology, via astronomy. The seventh Il-Khān Ghāzān Mahmūd, under whom Islam was at last recognised as the state religion of the Il-Khānate <sup>93</sup> was advised by Nawrūz and the amīrs,

"If the king wishes events to take place according to his desires, he must become Muslim, for in the stars and in the ordinances and biographies of the shaykhs it is said that in the year 694 {21st November, 1294 - 9th November, 1295} a Muslim king will ascend the throne". <sup>94</sup>

A further royal connection with astrology is demonstrated in the early 9th/15th-century Farsī illustrated horoscope of Iskandar Sultan. <sup>95</sup>

A safe delivery was perceived by the 4th/10th century physician al-Qurṭubī to be compromised on three counts, viz., by the mother, by the foetus, or by other external factors. <sup>96</sup> In this case the obesity of the mother appears to pose an 'external factor'. <sup>97</sup> Part



II of al-Ṭabarī's Firdaws al-ḥikma covers pregnancy, and the 3rd/9th century Al-hāwī of al-Rāzī cites a clinical case of a pregnant woman who was "extremely fat" and suffered paralysis on delivery {and subsequently epilepsy}.<sup>98</sup> It is not clear to the lay person whether her being overweight caused these conditions.

No instruments appear in the miniature, although they were available at that time;<sup>99</sup> their use was perhaps outwith the expertise of a midwife. The midwife's head is covered in a white wrap. Al-Qurtubī's medical treatise, at the section on midwifery, does not specifically recommend that this should be so.<sup>100</sup> This scarf is quite different to the head-coverings which the two attendants in saffron robes wear, and it may represent her 'badge of office'.

The female beside the Prophet's mother in the miniature of the Birth of Muḥammad in the Edinburgh Rashīd al-Dīn Jamī' al-Tawārīkh also wears a distinctive white headdress.<sup>101</sup> In this connection, it is worth quoting from al-Tha'ālībī's Lata'if al-Ma'arif, where Ibrāhīm ibn al-'Abbās al-Sūlī cited some elders concerning midwives in Ahwāz.<sup>102</sup> The midwives reported that they frequently delivered infants who suffered from a fever at birth.<sup>103</sup> This fact was apparently well-known among midwives and discussed by them;<sup>104</sup> it does not suggest that these women worked in isolation, and therefore there may have been some form of regulation and a midwives' 'guild'.

The young girl at the left is bringing in a brass brazier. This has a specific function and it seems to indicate that the woman is about to be delivered, for it was the practice to fumigate the genital area with the powerful medicaments of yellow sulphur, henna and bitumen after the extraction of the placenta. <sup>105</sup> This attendant appears to have a long piece of string in her right hand, and this may be for tying the ambergris to the woman's thigh. The foot of the kneeling attendant and the hands of the girl standing at the right hand side are gross in scale and monumental, and these figures may have been modelled on statues. The mother wears a heavy gold necklace, gold bracelets {asāwir}, and gold anklets {khalkhal} and her immediate attendant also wears gold anklets, whereas the two girls in saffron robes do not. This could indicate that there is a mother and daughter relationship and would in that case relegate the midwife and her attendants to a subservient role.

The miniature confirms the recommendation by early physicians that three women should assist the midwife; one at the right hand side, one at the left hand side, and one behind, to support her back and to allow the pregnant woman to lean back, if need be. <sup>106</sup>

Three women stand behind the Prophet's mother in the Edinburgh Rashīd al-Dīn Jamī' al-Tawārikh, <sup>107</sup> but it should be pointed out that there is also one other woman, beside the angel who holds the child. The midwife was obliged to be seated, and the term "seat of the midwife" has already appeared

in the text of the preceding Maqāma to indicate close proximity. <sup>108</sup> This would allow her to use her hand after the breaking of the waters to facilitate the baby's exit "by the grace of God". <sup>109</sup> Al-Qurṭubī also prescribed that the midwife should have short nails; <sup>110</sup> such recommendation would be to obviate damage and the introduction of infection to the womb.

The midwife's outstretched right leg, as illustrated, would both assist the mother in pushing the baby out of the womb and cushion the new born infant, and she has pushed her clothing up her thigh and out of the way for obvious reasons. Al-Qurṭubī also instructed the midwife to strap up the mother well, and then make her sit down in the place prepared for the birth. <sup>111</sup> This practice has been adopted, for one can clearly see a low red stool and two bands, outlined in light grey or white, around the mother's upper abdomen. These might act to control the mother's breathing and thus help her to push the child out.

Al-Wasīṭī's illustration is, therefore, technically correct on a number of key points, all of which imply a detailed knowledge of current obstetrical practices on his part. Whether this sprang from contemporary evidence or common knowledge of these practices among society in general, it is difficult to say, but the possibility of contemporary illustrated medical manuscripts being available to him cannot be precluded.

Critical remarks by al-Bīrūnī on the work of al-Khwārizmī

in the second half of the 5th/11th century in his work On Transits show that in addition to the Greek sciences, Indian works were also known to Muslim scholars in the Islamic sciences,<sup>112</sup> and Mesopotomian material occurred in Sanskrit works and in South Indian traditions.<sup>113</sup> The women in the birth scene seem to be Indian.

Mother and mother and infant scenes have appeared elsewhere, but in less explicit form, and certainly not in a fully frontal pose, for example the representation of a Caesarian section on folio 16v of the al-Bīrūnī Athār al-bāqiya 'an al-qurūn al-khāliya dated 707/1307-8 in Edinburgh University Library.<sup>114</sup> A nativity scene showing the Prophet and Amīna his mother are found in the Edinburgh Rashīd al-Dīn Jamī' al-Tawārīkh manuscript,<sup>115</sup> though in such a context it is necessarily a restrained image and the clothed mother is covered in bedclothes, while the late 8th/14th-century copy of the Paris Ajā'ib al-Makhlūqāt shows Tibetans adoring a new-born child being cradled by a very large clothed woman.<sup>116</sup> Finally, a miniature showing the Birth of Rustam, executed about 1450, shows a fully-dressed woman on a type of day-bed.<sup>117</sup> Four women in white shoulder-length headdresses attend her; there is a man, presumably a doctor, in attendance and another female attendant, and both of them have a mandīl {cloth or napkin}.

One curious point which has been noted in medical manuscript illustrations is the lack of distress suffered by the patients, and their compliance with their medical

attendants; in days before anasthaesia, this is well-nigh incredible. Perhaps it is indicative of a mystique created by medical practitioners and the hedging-in of practices associated with taboos. It appears that the magical properties of Abū Zayd's ambergris are indeed efficacious and his reputation vindicated, for in the 4th/10th century al-Baladī said of the onyx to be wrapped in the woman's hair,

"Even if it is placed near her, it will drive away all pains." 118

However, no talismans appear in the 9th/15th-century illustrations of a man having his haemorrhoids cauterised, 119 or another man having a dislocated hip set 120 with some sort of implement over the top of his hips, which presumably was tightened from underneath. 121

The illustrations in these other manuscripts were purely didactic in function, and yet there was an element of propriety on the part of the artists, for the man with the dislocated hip is naked, but no genitalia are shown, while the man with the haemorrhoids is shown clothed, and in a profile position with his robe pushed up over his buttocks. This seems to emphasise how shocking al-Wasitī's birth scene might have been in a book which was intended for a non-medical reader. For this reason, I suggest that it is feasible that the scene represents an iconographic borrowing from foreign sources and its adaptation to an Arab milieu. The full frontal pose itself, although technically correct, is reminiscent of figures in anatomical treatises; unfortunately, the only anatomical pregnant woman I



noted was in a 11th/17th-century Persian manuscript no. 5266 in the Majles Library, Tehran, the Tashrīh-ī mansūri of Mansūr ibn Muḥammad Ahmad.<sup>122</sup> Al-Wāsiṭī has, however, mitigated the shocking aspect of such explicitness for a Muslim reader by depicting a gross and obviously non-Arab woman.

The man of the house, the {shāh}, has necessarily been relegated to a secondary, if central, position in the illustration but even he is excluded from the women's quarters at this time. Like his wife, he is shown in strict frontality and Ettinghausen says that this factor, as well as the stillness of the other characters, is characteristic of Persian royal iconography.<sup>123</sup> His face is gaunt and long and is reinforced by the halo, and his dark skin, long black beard and long hair with a top-knot all suggest an Indian origin.

An almost identical face, but inclined slightly to the right, occurs in the portrait of an enthroned figure on a pointed cushion in the Dioscorides De Materia Medica manuscript of 621/1224.<sup>124</sup> Significantly, perhaps, he is a doctor, and this seems to confirm an Indian school of medical material which drew on and adapted Persian iconography.

The shāh sits on a pointed pink bolster in the pose of an eastern holy man, not a Persian ruler. His ankles are crossed, right over left, and they are curiously much lighter in skin tone than the rest of his body. He is sitting in what Esin describes as the "natural posture of ease" in Turkish iconography which had been adopted in several lands, including India.<sup>125</sup>

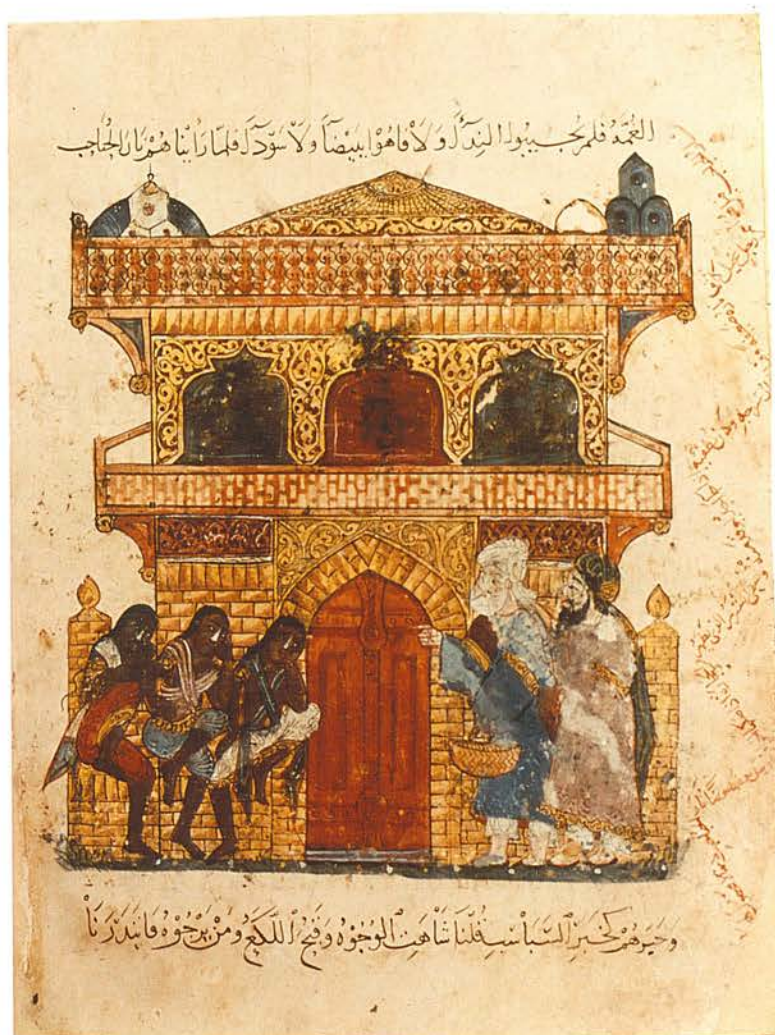
The throne has the pointed ends found elsewhere in Maqāmāt manuscripts, with elaborate corners which remind one of bookends. <sup>126</sup> However, its cut-away sides are unusual, in that these other thrones had straight, swept-up sides, whereas in this painting the throne resembles that of a 5th century Buddhist statue from a temple of Tun-Huang. <sup>127</sup> The pale blue background in the illustration has an unusual motif of fleur de lis with a darker, feathered edging. Behind the throne is a cut-off circular drapery resembling the curtains below, and the large pearl roundel motif of its border, which is also found on the bolster, suggests a Sāsānian influence. Like the halo, it also acts as a frame, reflects the outline of the domes, and ties the composition together. Further, the circular backcloth recalls the circular motif of a bronze plaque representing a Buddha from the middle of the 7th and 8th centuries at Aq̄-besim in Yeti-su, <sup>128</sup> and it is also echoed in a ruler portrait on an early 6th/12th century enamelled dish from Mesopotamia, now in Innsbruck. <sup>129</sup>

The shāh is wearing non-Arab clothing, although his body-wrap bears a ṭirāz band. <sup>130</sup> Two youthful attendants replace the flying genies or angels who appear in Islamic royal iconography, <sup>131</sup> and they have long, uncovered hair like their master.

The whole architectural setting is very detailed, and it resembles the artist's tavern on folio 33, in Maqāma 12. <sup>132</sup> The building is two storeys high and consists of a central reception room on each floor and a side chamber on either side.

One must imagine this as the interior of the two-storeyed palace depicted by al-Wāsitī earlier in the tale, on folio 120v, <sup>133</sup> reproduced below.

Paris B.N. 5847 arabe, f.120v:7G2, Mq. 39.



Returning to the interior of the palace, it is obviously a commodious structure, for the domes have clerestory windows like those in the public bath-house, {ḥammām}. The splendid pair of drapes are in a heavy brocade with a golden floral scroll pattern, and similar vegetal whorls have been noted elsewhere in a variety of different media. <sup>134</sup> Lavish curtains have already appeared on folio 13v in this manuscript, in the house of the spinning lady. <sup>135</sup> They conform to al-Washshā's description of curtain fabrics. <sup>136</sup> The artist came from Wāsiṭ, and it is possible that the curtains illustrated were manufactured in that town and commonly found, for al-Muqaddasī considered that the best curtains for walls and windows were made there. <sup>137</sup> Al-Khaṭīb mentioned Wāsiṭ hangings in the furnishings of al-Muqtadir's palace. <sup>138</sup>

A yellow brick floor occurs elsewhere in this manuscript and it is also seen in the Leningrad S.23. <sup>139</sup> The red carved wooden rail below the ruler, which may be a platform, could be of teak wood {sāj}; <sup>140</sup> according to al-Jāḥiẓ, al-Hamadhānī and others, teak was the best wood for doors, windows and roofs, <sup>141</sup> and lumber from East Africa was imported into the Arabian Gulf. <sup>142</sup>

The doorway is decorated with stucco or marble spandrels, and a small plaque in the same material appears above the narrow ante-rooms. These plaques are carved or moulded in relief and set in wood, <sup>143</sup> and they may be ventilation grilles. We know that stucco decoration featured widely in house and palace decoration in Sāmarrā at an earlier period, where it was used for dado, window and door ornamentation.

Al-Gailanī has pointed out the relationship between heart-shaped motifs in Sāmarrā stuccoes and the Chinese joo-e head form, which was a symbol for longevity.<sup>145</sup> He noted these in the Leningrad S. 23 Maqāmāt manuscript, in Maqāmāt 37, 38 and 39,<sup>146</sup> and they also occurred in al-Wāsiṭī's painting of Abū Zayd and his son appearing before the governor of Raḥba in Maqāma 10.

These same heart-shapes now recur in al-Wāsiṭī's birth scene on the two small plaques above the ground floor ante-rooms, and on the carved red wooden frieze above Abū Zayd and al-Ḥārith. They are also found on stucco-work in a similar position in the spinning lady's house on folio 13v.<sup>147</sup> The central part of the upper storey of the palace carries a carved or moulded crenellated frieze, variations of which have occurred elsewhere in Paris B.N. 5847.<sup>148</sup>

The architecture of the palace therefore appears to be a fair reflection of contemporary style and construction, and the birth scene, which is unique in Maqāmāt illustrations, has revealed a very detailed knowledge of current midwifery practices. References to the recourse to the occult on the part of the author and the artist are substantiated by source material. Diverse iconographic and stylistic influences have also played their part in this remarkable scene.

We turn now to women and their position in relation to the law.



{c} Women and the Law.

Maqāma 9 is set in Alexandria, where the prudent al-Ḥārith saw fit to introduce himself and pay his respects to the local qāḍī for the purpose of strengthening his case in the event of litigation in his business affairs. While he was attending court one evening, when the qāḍī was about to distribute alms to the needy, a woman, who was dragging along an "ill-conditioned old man", entered and addressed the judge.

In al-Wāsiṭī's miniature on folio 25 there is an incompletely reproduced commentary on the text written in red in zigzag fashion down the left hand side of the folio. The three lines of prose text above the miniature and the two lines of verse below it indicate that the illustration is very much misplaced in the text and, strictly speaking, should appear earlier, for they read,

"Whereupon the judge sent after him one of his trusty  
servants, and commanded him to observe his proceedings:  
But it was not long before he came back in haste,  
And returned laughing immoderately." 149

This illustration follows.



The servant explained that he had seen the old man gleefully singing and dancing on the success of his deception.<sup>150</sup> The judge took it in good part and laughed so much that his hat fell off.<sup>151</sup> It should be noted here that the text gives dānniya for 'hat', and

Steingass says that it was so called because it resembled the dānn or wine container.<sup>152</sup> Preston described this hat worn by judges as "shaped like a fir cone",<sup>153</sup> but the 6/13th and 7/14th Maqāmāt manuscripts invariably show the qādi wearing a ṭaylasān over a turban, unless the judge is portrayed as a governor, where he does not, in any case, wear a dānniya. Fashions may have changed since the manuscript was written in the 6th/12th century and subsequently illustrated in the 7th/13th century.

Abū Zayd's wife has unsuccessfully petitioned the qādi for restitution for herself and her child who was "feeble as a lath",<sup>154</sup> on the grounds that her husband was a malingerer who had dissipated the proceeds of the dowry {mahr} which he had made over to her for her exclusive use and benefit, in accordance with the terms of the Sharī'a.<sup>155</sup> The Muslim dowry thus differs from practices elsewhere, where it seems to be regarded as the 'bride price' to her parents. Asad points out that the actual amount of the mahr is not prescribed by law, and that it depends on the agreement between the two parties.<sup>156</sup> In Islām, the wife forfeits her rights to the dowry if four independent witnesses testify that she has been guilty of immorality,<sup>157</sup> although in practice such a charge is exceedingly difficult to prove. Abū Zayd's eloquent counter-claim and impassioned plea to "decide with justice, or to wrong incline"<sup>158</sup> results in the pair receiving money from the qādi, who has urged conciliation in conformity with Qur'ānic prescription.<sup>159</sup>

Abū Zayd's wife is unveiled; it was, apparently, acceptable for women's faces to be uncovered in public in times of

distress. <sup>160</sup> She doubtless dresses in this way so as to appear more vulnerable and to elicit sympathy. She wears a fine, long outer robe with gold edging; this is of a smokey-grey hue, and it conforms in description to what al-Washsha' had outlined in the 4th/10th century as being the fashionable ghilāla dukhāniyya, viz., smokey-grey ghilāla. <sup>161</sup> Underneath she wears a red patterned shift {gamīs} with gold braid around the hem. It should be borne in mind that although the same names appear for clothing in different parts of the Islamic world, the garments themselves could apparently show variations, according to the material used, and so forth. Ashtor, in the Egyptian context, describes the izār as a "figure-enveloping wrap" and a "ubiquitous garment" which was seldom mentioned in Geniza documents; <sup>162</sup> a marriage contract written in 1083 priced one at one and a quarter dīnārs. <sup>163</sup>

The thawb, which is still worn today, was worn by men and women, and was an ample, enveloping robe with wide sleeves. <sup>164</sup> In the first third of the 6th/12th century a half-silk {mulḥam} thawb cost three-quarters of a dīnār, <sup>165</sup> while a fine linen thawb of Dabiqi fabric cost ten dīnārs in 1134. <sup>166</sup> Ashtor describes the rida' as "an ample cloak with which women covered themselves when going out of the house", <sup>167</sup> and says that <sup>in</sup> 1134 one could purchase a half-rida' for three dīnārs; <sup>168</sup> a muslin one, which was presumably full-size, cost two and a half dīnārs in 1115. <sup>169</sup>

Abū Zayd's wife's soft leather ankle-boots {khifāf} have an inset of a different colour at the side, and pointed toes; thus it is possible that they are the khifāf zanāḥiyya, which description emphasises their narrowness. One might have expected her to

appear in her oldest clothing, but she told the judge,

"Now when I went away with him, I had rich apparel,  
And household effects, aye, and superfluities {plumage}  
with me." 170

as she sought to impress upon him that she had fallen on hard times through no fault of her own.

The text describes Abū Zayd's wife as "the mother of children" or "a woman of enticing beauty", 171 and al-Wāsiṭī has portrayed her as a handsome, mature woman who is very much of the ample build of females in general who appear in his miniatures. It may be that the women he painted wore the undergarment called ghilāla, which the 7th/13th century lexicographer al-Ṣāghānī describes as

"a piece of cloth with which a woman makes her posterior {to appear} large, binding it upon her hinderpart, beneath her waist-wrapper." 172

It should be noted that this definition varies from the 4th/10th century description of al-Washshā' which was earlier mentioned.

The judge's outstretched two fingers are in a placatory gesture, but her eloquent hand gestures disclose that Abū Zayd's wife is not at all happy with his legal opinion {fatwa} that Abū Zayd "ought to be acquitted from all blame" 173 nor with the admonition to her to

"return to the retirement of thy home,  
And pardon the husband of thy youth;  
And cease from thy sad complaining." 174

She seems to have no intention whatever of submitting resignedly to the will of her lord as she has been exhorted to do. It should not be assumed by non-Muslim readers that because Muslim women wear veils they necessarily see their roles as passive and



submissive. The seclusion of women in Baghdād was, apparently, an 'Abbāsid innovation which Raḥmatullah says was "a Persian or Turkish import into Arabic society" <sup>175</sup> and the ḥarīm therefore represented a new social order. The freedom which women had enjoyed in the early days of Islam was "largely lost" now, and the major change was the veiling of women. <sup>176</sup> Al-Khaṭīb, writing in the 5th/11th century, possibly did not rate women very highly, for he included the biographies of only some 29 females, spanning a period of 300 years. <sup>177</sup>

Usāma tells how his mother acted during an emergency when no male family members were present. She distributed weapons to those capable of fighting and she sat her daughter beside the balcony of the castle of Shayzār; she prepared herself to throw her daughter over, rather than have her fall into the hands of the Ismā'īlī, "the peasants and ravishers". <sup>178</sup>

Al-Miskawayh in 333/944 described Ḥusn, the mother-in-law of Abū Aḥmad al-Faḍl ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān of Shīrāz, as "strong-minded, astute and intellectual". <sup>179</sup> She spoke both Persian and Arabic and she was all-powerful as Stewardess at the court of al-Mustakfi, having been instrumental in his appointment on the deposing of al-Muttaqi. <sup>180</sup> The theme of a woman boldly seeking justice from a ruler recurs in a Persian illustrated manuscript in the British Museum which was copied at Baghdad in 1396, where an old woman seeks redress for her wrongs and fearlessly confronts the Saljūq Sultan Mālikshāh, who ruled from 1072-92. <sup>181</sup> This in turn is derived from an illustration in Nizāmī's Makhzan ul-asrār where the king is the Saljūq ruler Sanjar, who reigned from 1117-1157. <sup>182</sup>

A somewhat discomfited al-Ḥārith sits at the right hand side with his hand to his mouth, pondering upon the moral dilemma of whether or not he should reveal his friend's duplicity to the qādī with whom he has just ingratiated himself. Al-Ḥārith would know that his friend had fallen well short of al-Ghazālī's guidelines for the witness who appears before a judge, that he should

" ... feel his responsibility for telling the truth, bear himself with modesty and keep in mind his religious duty {that is, conduct himself as a man of piety and faith}. He should not commit perjury, but should only bear testimony to that of which he is sure, guarding himself against error through forgetfulness, and arguing as little as possible with the judge." <sup>183</sup>

Such raising of the hand to the mouth is described by Buchtal as "a motif well-known in Classical antiquity and taken over by Byzantine art", for example in Biblical painting. <sup>184</sup> In facial features and in this hand gesture, al-Ḥārith here bears a strong resemblance to an Arab who stands to the right hand side of a warrior in a miniature in the Dioscorides De Materia Medica of 621/1224 from Baghdad. <sup>185</sup> A rather similar al-Ḥārith 'type' {a qādī} can be seen elsewhere in al-Wāsiṭī's work. <sup>186</sup> Buchtal draws attention to the great similarity in Semitic features, and turbans worn to the back of the head, in these manuscripts and also in some Syrian Gospel illustrations. <sup>187</sup> It may be, as Buchtal suggests, that in terms of iconography and human types, the similarities between certain Syriac manuscripts and, for example, al-Wāsiṭī's, must have evolved within Islamic painting. Vestiges of the influence of the earlier Baghdad school of painting persisted until the end of the 6th/12th century, for turbans worn well back on the head recur in the Istanbul Marzubān-nāma manuscript of Sa'd al-Dīn

Varāvīni, which was copied at Baghdād in 698/1299. 188

Abū Zayd bows obsequiously and kisses the judge's hand in thanks for the alms he has been given, and for his considered judgment of his marital plight. In the Vienna A.F.9 Maqāmāt Abū Zayd is shown in mirror image bowing deeply from the waist before a qādī in Maqāma 8, and he, too, may be about to kiss the judge's hand. 189 A contemporary example of Mosul metalwork, the Blacas ewer, 190 captures exactly al-Wasitī's genre flavour, and its lowly subject bears a close resemblance to al-Wasitī's Abū Zayd; this does suggest, at least, the influence of 'types'. The ewer scene is also a mirror image of that in the manuscript and the figure of authority there is a prince.

A rather more formal version of the theme of the hand-kissing of a prince is seen on another ewer from Mosul, in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore. 191 Baer considers that such signs of obeisance are unique to Mesopotamian metalwork. 192 These metalwork scenes seem to be related to the frontispiece of Vol. XI of the Cairo Kitāb al-Aghānī adab 579, dated 614/1217; 193 however, there the hand-kissing character has been replaced by an upright figure, probably a scribe, who wears similar clothing. 194

There is undoubtedly an element of satire in the Abū Zayd portrait, for he has successfully duped the qādī, and he kisses the left hand. It is probably unthinkable that Abū Zayd would kiss the left hand, which is considered ritually impure, and both scenes on the ewers described above involved the kissing of the prince's right hand. The full implication of this hand-kissing scene would probably be well understood by and cause great

merriment among the literate bourgeois audience, and Abū Zayd, in describing how his poverty had enfeebled him in mind and body, had also used the metaphor "my power of stretching out my arm became straitened".<sup>195</sup> This appears to be a reference to his act of soliciting for money which has been taken up by the painter.

There are literary precedents for Abū Zayd's impudence.<sup>196</sup> Ibn al-Tiqṭaqā recorded how, early in the 3rd/9th century, a poet addressed a vizier thus,

"Money and intelligence enable a man to stand in the courts of the Princes; as you see, I possess neither."<sup>197</sup>

Al-Tanūkhī's Table Talk of a Mesopotamian Judge tells us that the vizier 'Alī ibn 'Īsa recounted how he had been petitioned by one Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan, who seized his hand and said,

"'May I be no descendant of 'Abbās, if I let the vizier go before he has signed this paper, or else kiss my hand as I kissed his.' Standing up, I signed the paper, but marvelled at his unmannerliness and impudence."<sup>198</sup>

The secret of Abū Zayd's impunity to act in a similar fashion in our tale perhaps also lies in his ability to make people 'marvel' at him, for he capitalises on this element of surprise and then makes a hasty retreat. One should not underestimate the power of poets and other 'entertainers' to ridicule those in authority to understand the fear they could inspire.

This composition is an adaptation of the courtly repertoire, which al-Wāsiṭī was shortly to exploit to telling effect in his tavern scene in Maḡāma 12,<sup>199</sup> where a gracious and benevolent Abū Zayd sits on a throne, a wine glass in his left hand and a mandīl or napkin in his right. On at least two further occasions al-Wāsiṭī seems to elevate Abū Zayd's status in an adaptation of

royal iconography; in Maqāma 30, an old man, who may be Abū Zayd, is seated on a throne with pointed ends in the beggars' mansion, and in the upper part of the composition in the childbirth scene in Maqāma 39<sup>200</sup> Abū Zayd is cast in the role of a hakīm or wise man to the wālī. However, the number of possible models is limited.

Al-Wāsiṭi had another tilt at authority in Maqāma 10, where he portrayed the Governor of Raḥba in the worst possible light.<sup>201</sup> These portraits are lightly satirical and never approach lampooning, and this element may also be present in other manuscripts.<sup>202</sup>

Servile ceremonies of the old Sāsānian court had been adopted by the 'Abbāsid caliphs, whose subjects had to kiss the ground before them.<sup>203</sup> Al-Tanūkhī recounts what may be the earliest instance of kissing the ground in the Islamic world which involved a drunken jeweller, Ibn al-Jassās, and Abū'l-Husayn ibn Tūlūn {Khumarawayh}.<sup>204</sup> Al-Miskawayh reports that when Hamid ibn 'Abbās was invested as vizier by al-Muqtadir in the early 4th/10th century, "he kissed the ground before the Caliph"<sup>205</sup> and Ibn Khaldūn said that

"in the case of higher personages permission was given either to kiss the caliph's hand or foot or the edge of his robe or ṭirāz."<sup>206</sup>

Al-Miskawayh describes how, when Sulaymān ibn Ḥasan was summoned in circa 321/932 to be appointed as vizier,

"... he presented himself in his barge, and was met by the commanders and the people, who kissed his hand."<sup>207</sup>

Shaykh Uways writes in his memoirs that in 8th/14th-century



Adharbaijān, when the Ashrāfiīs from all around the districts assembled, he

"bestowed on every one, according to his rank, a favour and special honours. Some had come to kiss the foot of his highness - may his government be perpetuated." 208

Finally, the memoirs of Abū'l-Fida' recall how in 720/1390

"all the army was mounted, and they kissed the ground before him {meaning Sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir}." 209  
These accounts bear out well Hogarth's assertion that,

"Never has captor more swiftly been captured by his captive than Arabia by Persia." 210

The qādī in al-Wāṣitī's miniature above is seated on a type of throne which is draped with a circular rug. He wears an extremely fine ṭaylasān or shawl of office over his turban, and his tunic, which is of a heavy, rich material, has extremely wide red-lined sleeves with brocade at the edge and upper arm. The ṭaylasān may well have been of Nishāpūrī mulḥam, a half-silk fabric, or it could have come from Kirmān. 211

His pointed beard is rather longer than the general norm of measuring the breadth of a hand below the chin, following the example of the Prophet, 212 and this concern with personal appearance is perhaps intended to indicate a foible on the judge's part. Source material tends to confirm that this was sometimes so among the judiciary, for one reads that the renowned juriconsult, Abū Ḥanīfa, who was both a silk manufacturer and a merchant, paid four hundred dīnārs for a robe in the 2nd/8th century, 213 while the 4th/10th-century vizier 'Alī ibn 'Īsa, who was himself a model of probity, castigated a qādī over his extravagant clothing. 214

These points underscore for the viewer the extent of Abū-

Zayd's duplicity and his skill in exploiting the weaknesses of those who, in theory, should have known better than to be deceived, on account of their supposedly-superior station in society.

The miniature showing the very different treatment of the same scene in Paris B.N. 6094 is reproduced for comparison only.

Paris, B.N. arabe 6094, f.27v:2C1, Mq. 9.



Note should be made of the curious un-Arab female headdress. It has parallels in the Paris B.N. arabe 3465 Kalīla wa Dimna,<sup>215</sup> a mid to late 8th/14th century Kitāb al-Hayawān<sup>216</sup> and a mid-8th/14th century Hebrew Haggadah or order of service book for Passover from Barcelona.<sup>217</sup>

Al-Ḥārith relates in Maqāma 40 how he witnessed an altercation between a man and his wife before a miserly judge, and the relevant caption in Paris B.N. 3929 reads,

"Al-Ḥārith ibn Hammām related: I intended leaving Tabrīz at a time when it was unwholesome {irksome} for high and low, and empty of patrons and men of largesse; and while I was making ready my travelling-gear and foraging for some company on the journey, I encountered there Abū Zayd, the Sarūjī, wrapped up in a cloak and surrounded by females."<sup>218</sup>

There is a parenthetical addition in bold gold thulūth script down the side of the illustration announcing

"The picture of Abū Zayd with the women around him."

The miniature is reproduced overleaf.



Abū Zayd kneels at centre stage before the qādī to plead his case. This is one instance where the 'judge' of the text <sup>219</sup> is not shown wearing the taylasan, and he is perhaps a governor; for example he is very similar to the Governor of Marw in Maqāma 38 of the London B.L. or. 1200. <sup>220</sup> This may indicate that the Paris B.N. 3929 artist did not read beyond the beginning of the



text to establish the scenario, although it is true that governors did preside in a judicial function in a higher court {dīwān al-mazālim}, as discussed in "The Governor".

The usual youthful attendant stands to the judge's right, wearing a pointed hat, and this slightly exotic element is reinforced by the long ends of the judge's costume, which are reminiscent of the Persian patev or ribbon denoting royalty. A similarly attired youth appears later in this manuscript <sup>221</sup> The position of his hands suggests that our lad has been appropriated from the courtly repertoire and that he should be holding up a fly whisk or fan.

Two women stand to the left, and a new item of female clothing appears now, the naṭaq, which was mentioned in the text of Maqāma 14 <sup>222</sup> and is described by Steingass as

"a kind of body veil, tied by a woman round her waist in such a manner that the upper part hangs down over the lower as far as the knees, the lower reaching down to the feet." <sup>223</sup>

The woman nearest Abū Zayd must be his wife, for she is gesticulating with her left hand in refutation of his accusations, and she has secured her white naṭaq over her left shoulder. This reveals her all-in-one khimār or head and shoulder covering, her unveiled face and her calf-length gamīs. The khimār appears to be a modified form of turban and confirms reports of women wearing a headdress wound like a turban which have been raised elsewhere. <sup>224</sup> A similar heavy headdress is worn by the old woman who had been sent out by the King of Syria to find Gulshah's mother in the Istanbul Hazine 841 Varga va Gulshah



manuscript. <sup>225</sup> Such headgear might also account for the very large, round appearance of women's heads in some other Maqāmāt illustrations, for example in al-Wasiṭī's village scene in the 43rd tale. <sup>226</sup>

Her companion wears an izār or wrap over her qamīs and she partially covers her face with it, perhaps in embarrassment or consternation at what she hears. Her qamīs has a large, single leaf motif on a striking dark red field. Neither woman wears the sarawīl or trousers, but no bare leg can be seen, for they wear dark leather boots. One wonders whether boots came under the category of fashionable 'accessories', being perhaps an extension of shoes which fulfilled the requirements of female modesty, namely to cover the bare leg. Folds on the naṭaq and izār indicate that they are flimsy garments. Similar lightweight garments and boots also occur in the same Vargā va Gulshāh manuscript.

The caption mentioned "women", and one should bear in mind that, in accordance with canon law, two female witnesses are regarded as equivalent to one male witness for testifying in court. <sup>227</sup> The reader would likely understand this illustration in that context. Even if this were not so, the nature of Abū Zayd's allegations against his wife deal with conjugal rights; they are extremely personal and scurrilous, and she would doubtless feel in need of encouragement and support from a woman companion. Preston has not translated this tale "for obvious reasons", <sup>228</sup> although he describes the vituperation

as curious and elaborate and full of literary allusions, while Steingass considers that moralists might object to the tone of the Maqāma. 229

Divorce {ṭalaq}, which Abū Zayd is threatening, 230 is seen only as a last resort in Islām, 231 and it is likely that the companion is a family member who seeks reconciliation at any cost, in accordance with the law 232 and in line with the advice the qādi gave to Abū Zayd's wife in Maqāma 9 to

" ... return therefore to the retirement of thy home,  
And pardon the husband of thy youth ... " 233

Although the miniature lacks the architectural props of the shadow theatre, Grabar's point about the topical and "scabrous plots" of shadow plays in general, and the important part which women played in them, is well taken in this context. 234 Once more, the lively depictions by the Paris B.N. 3929 artist highlight a possible connection between the subject matter of al-Ḥarīrī's text, the element of the 'playing out' of his scene, and the immediacy of the shadow play. This same energetic feeling is noticeable in the Leningrad S.23, the above mentioned Vargā va Gulshah and mīnā'ī pottery. 235

Both of these tales confirm my point made elsewhere that the females in the Maqāmāt were quite capable of acquitting themselves well in the pursuance of their rights; they are far removed from any stereotyped Western view of veiled submissive creatures.

We will now consider the position of the slave-girl {jāriya} in the 7th/13th-century Muslim world.

{d} The jāriya.

The most entrancing female painting appears in Paris B.N. arabe 3929, in Maqāma 18, where we find the young girl described by Abū Zayd as a jāriya. Al-Ḥārith relates how, on his return journey from Damascus to Baghdād, <sup>236</sup> when he stopped over at Sinjār, near Mosul, he and his travelling companions were invited by a merchant to a banquet. This gives Abū Zayd the opportunity to launch into one of his convoluted tales. His story runs,

"Now I had a maiden, who was unrivalled in perfection;  
If she unveiled, the two lamps of heaven were put to  
shame,  
And all hearts were inflamed with the fires of  
desire;  
If she smiled, she {displayed teeth that} made pearls  
despicable,  
And {in comparison whereof} choice pearls would be  
sold for pulse;  
When she gazed earnestly, she excited deep emotions,  
And made the fascination of Babylon to be realised." <sup>237</sup>

and he goes on to tell how he was tricked out of his treasure. There is a Qur'ānic allusion in this last line, <sup>238</sup> and Abū Zayd's composition echoes that of the contemporary Ṣūfī poet 'Umar ibn al-Farīd, who said of his mistress ...

"You rave about the full moon in the vault of heaven;  
Leave off thy delusions, for she is my  
beloved not that {moon}  
Her charms survive the revival of the dawn." <sup>239</sup>

Five lines of text in naskhī script appear above the miniature, and they continue to extol the girl's singing. It was deemed superior to that of Ma'bad, an early Umayyad precentor at the Medina mosque, <sup>240</sup> and her minstrelsy outshone even that of Zunām, a

celebrated musician at Hārūn al-Rashid's court. <sup>241</sup> The caption in gold thulūth letters reads,

"And this is her picture."

Paris B.N. arabe 3929, f.151:4A2, Mq. 18.



Abū Zayd's maiden is described as a jārīya <sup>242</sup> or slave girl, but she was obviously extremely cultivated. She may have undergone a long and expensive training and she would therefore represent a

considerable investment on the part of her master. <sup>243</sup> The unveiled jāriya is dressed in a heavily-brocaded deep blue and gold outer robe reaching to mid-calf, with an open front; this would be worn over other clothing. According to al-Jāhiz, this item comes under the category of dithār or cut and sewn outer garments. <sup>244</sup> The unusual sleeves of the robe are extremely deep and measure from the girl's breast to below the knee. It may be that this was similar to the 8th/14th-century fashionable Mamlūk bahtala or gamīs with a long train and sleeves three ells wide which was to incur the wrath of the Wazīr Amīr Manjak and led to the punishment of women who wore it. <sup>245</sup> However, this had little effect on popular fashion.

Very wide sleeves also seem to have been popular among men at that time, for they appear on clothing in a 7th/13th-century scene on the Freer Canteen, which was made in Syria, <sup>246</sup> as well as on the robes of the Brothers on the frontispieces of The Epistles of the Sincere Brethren, {Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā}, dated 1287. <sup>247</sup> They would be practical on two counts, for coolness and for their function as pockets. <sup>248</sup>

The brocaded robe here must be Stillman's tirāz farajīyya; <sup>249</sup> this description is somewhat unsatisfactory, since it seems merely to denote a garment which has tirāz bands and is split or open down the front. Al-Dhahabī reports that Nūr al-Dīn received a set of robes of honour {khilla} in 567/1171-2; these included "a long, flowing open robe with large sleeves {farajīyya}". <sup>250</sup> I



suggest that our maiden's robe is a variation of the male garment, the jubba, and that farajīyya merely denotes that it is split, <sup>251</sup> viz., without closures. Al-Ṭabarī tells us that the Caliph Amīn offered a jubba of gold-figured silk to a singer who pleased him; <sup>252</sup> later, regretting his rashness {for it was presumably extremely costly}, he spoilt it. <sup>253</sup> Although it was more commonly a woollen garment, the luxurious variety of jubba could be manufactured in silk, or embroidered with gold and silk. <sup>254</sup> Cairo Geniza documents mention only two colours of jubba, blue and green, <sup>255</sup> and this may provide further confirmation of my use of the term. Because it is rarely mentioned in marriage contracts which related to Egypt and Tunisia, Stillman concluded that the jubba was more popular in Syria than in Egypt in the mediaeval period. <sup>256</sup>

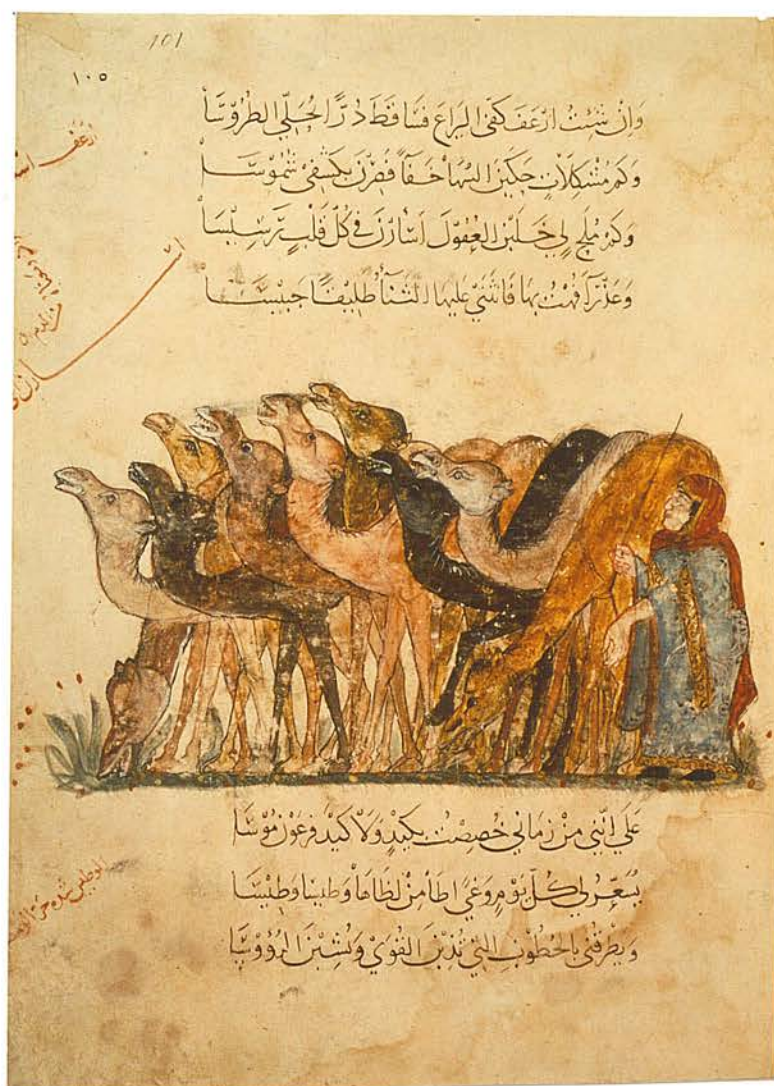
That male clothing could, apparently, be varied to suit the female form, is confirmed by al-Ṭabarī, who described a type of Rashīdī cloak, the ghilālā, of "women's cut". <sup>257</sup> This is yet another variation of the term ghilālā. It is unlikely that the girl would appear outdoors in this robe, for not only is it obviously expensive, but it would be considered immodest to expose so much of her arm. The fabric is extremely richly patterned, with a heavy pale blue vegetal design on the dark blue field. Realistic, single birds are also featured in gold and there is little of the earlier, static heraldic quality of decoration on this

textile. <sup>258</sup> The birds are not enclosed in a 'frame'. <sup>259</sup> It is possible that the fabric was manufactured in Baghdād, for Marco Polo reported,

"In Bandas {Baghdād} they weave many kinds of silk stuffs and gold brocades such as nasich and nac {nakhkh} and a cramoisy {kirmīzī} and many other tissues richly wrought with figures of beasts and birds." <sup>260</sup>

On the upper half of each sleeve there is a gold tirāz band with elements of incomplete Arabic epigraphy within a border of white roundels. Writing in the late 3rd/9th-4th/10th centuries, Ibn 'Abd-Rabbih reveals that as well as featuring the more common religious invocations or political inscriptions, the tirāz sometimes also bore verses of an amatory or sentimental nature. <sup>261</sup>

Al-Wāsiṭī also shows the famous herd of camels in Maqāma 32 <sup>262</sup> being tended by a singer {gayna} who wears a robe with equally wide sleeves. She may well have received this robe as a gift for her musical prowess. This illustration is reproduced overleaf for brief comparison only; the singer's robe is of a blue-green diaphanous material and it has heavy gold edging, tirāz and a red lining.



Underneath the jubba the maiden wears a light gamīs, or shift, which opens at the front. It has an ornamental neck-band and falls below the knee. The gamīs was basically a type of shirt for men and women, with a round hole for the neck. <sup>263</sup> It seems to have come with or without a front opening, <sup>264</sup> and the length could vary;

the women's gamīs might also have a ṭirāz band. <sup>265</sup> Other versions for women were the itb, the sidār, the shawdar, the garqūr and the qargal. <sup>266</sup> According to Dozy, <sup>267</sup> these terms designated chemises of a similar shape, but with subtle variations on the basic gamīs and its fabric, and according to the place of origin. They came under the classification of shi'ār, or clothes worn next to the bare body. <sup>268</sup>

Below the gamīs one can clearly see the sarāwīl or light, patterned trousers, which are very similar in cut to the male version. These are of the smokey-grey colour which al-Washshā' outlined as forming part of the elegant woman's lingerie in 'Abbāsīd times. <sup>269</sup> A tikka or trouser cord was used with the sarāwīl and as our maiden surely qualifies under the heading of al-Washshā''s "elegant woman", one might reasonably expect that her tikka is made of ibrism silk. <sup>270</sup>

Indigo was extensively cultivated in Syria during the mediaeval period, <sup>271</sup> and in Alexandria in 1396 Baghdādian indigo cost thirty five dīnārs per qintār. <sup>272</sup> In the earlier Maqāma of Ḥulwān, Abū Zayd was inspired to eulogise a weeping maiden who bit her hand in anguish on parting from her lover, as follows,

"When last I met the idol of my love,  
Her crimson veil I prayed her to remove,  
Whose glowing tint obscured her aspect bright,  
As eve's red lustre dims the queen of night ... " <sup>273</sup>

Then, as now, women were well-practised in the use of cosmetics and they used various aromatic shampoos to keep their hair lustrous. <sup>274</sup> Hair fashions differed, with hair being waved or curled, plaited or formed into ringlets. <sup>275</sup> A band of black silk

was frequently tied to the head, ribbons and lace were also used, and various head ornaments were worn. <sup>276</sup>

Around her head our maiden wears a long, fine red scarf with gold circlets, and the garment may be the ḥarīr mu'ayyan or silk embroidered with a circular motif which was evidently favoured by ladies of refinement. A 6th/12th-century document <sup>277</sup> reveals that red was obtained from baḡam, an Indian wood, and the price at that time in Egypt fluctuated from between thirty to forty dīnārs per qinṭār. <sup>278</sup>

Pearls frame the maiden's face and neck. Stillman describes this headdress as an 'iṣāba mā'ila; <sup>279</sup> this term is self-explanatory, since it has connotations of wealth, in particular of silver and gold. <sup>280</sup> Ibn 'Abd-Rabbih recounts, on the testimony of an eyewitness, that at al-Rashīd's court girls wore the 'iṣāba or type of turban which was bejewelled with pearls and jacinth and featured love poems. <sup>281</sup> Jacinth or yāqūt was brought from Ceylon, and strictly speaking was a blue gemstone, possibly sapphire, but the term could include a variety of stones such as garnet, quartz, topaz and the like, or pearls {lu'lu'}, which came from Oman and the Gulf around Bahrain. <sup>282</sup> The 'iṣāba appears to have been an innovation of al-Rashīd's half sister, 'Ulayya. <sup>283</sup> A Persian variation of the 'iṣāba may be seen on the base of a mīnā'ī or Persian polychrome pottery bowl dated around 1200, which shows a noble lady being bled. <sup>284</sup> Her headdress, however, is heavier and of rather more elaborate design, and one can see a fringe of pearls at the forehead and what are perhaps small ornaments of gold or silver sewn on the sides. The Persian example may conform rather



more to the literal translation of 'iṣāba mā'ila in this respect.

Around the 'iṣāba our jāriya wears a wikāya or headband, which might also be embellished with a poem. <sup>285</sup> An extract from Al-Iqd al-Farīd is a typical example of such a verse, where a lover wrote of his mistress ...

"Across her brow with musk  
Three lines I traced, as stray  
Soft moon-entangled clouds;  
'God curse those who betray' ..." <sup>286</sup>

The girl's headband is tied behind her left ear in a manner reminiscent of the Persian patev or ribbon denoting royalty from Sasanian times, and from its lightness and delicacy, this fabric appears to be silk. Although the hairband was also known as zunnār wikāya, the zunnār more properly referred to a belt which was at one time worn by the People of the Book. <sup>287</sup>

The maiden stands near a small stylised tree, which is depicted in the Mesopotamian style; she may be outdoors. It would be rather surprising if this were the case, unless she was in the immediate precincts of the house, since one would expect her face to be covered with the niqāb or outdoor veil. <sup>288</sup> Mediaeval dictionaries describe this as a veil "that is upon {or covers} the pliable part of the nose" or which "extends as high as the circuit of the eye". <sup>289</sup>

Her serene pose here is in strong contrast to postures generally throughout this Paris B.N. 3929 manuscript, where the characters are lively and somewhat reminiscent of shadow-play figures. In this, there is possibly the suggestion that the manuscript was the work of more than one artist.

Plants and trees had long been favourite metaphors for female physical attributes, and the small bush in the illustration may well be a pomegranate tree; this would provide a visual metaphor for the embodiment of womanly beauty. Al-Firdawsi described Mihrāb's daughter, Rudaba in his Shāh-nāma in the following terms,

"Her cheeks are like pomegranate blossoms,  
she hath cherry lips,  
Her silver breasts bear two pomegranate seeds,  
Her eyes are twin narcissi in a garden." <sup>290</sup>

Zāl found her irresistible.

Perhaps the use of rouge to achieve the "pomegranate blossom" effect was considered seemly only in the very young, for al-Ṭanūkhī tells us that the traditionalist al-Baghandī castigated a slave-girl, "The time is passed wherein you used to paint with rouge." <sup>291</sup> This seems to be a Qur'ānic allusion <sup>292</sup> which refers to God's bounty. Lips and cheeks were stained red with a concoction called in Persian chehra barafurukhtan. <sup>293</sup>

It was the fashion to stain the fingers and toes as far as the first joint, and this girl has clearly done so on both of her hands. She seems to be gesticulating with her hands in a precise manner, and one wonders if she was modelled on a 'performer', perhaps a singer/dancer. Red henna was applied to the nails to impart "a more bright, clear, and permanent colour than to the skin", <sup>294</sup> while the dark grey variety was applied to the rest of the fingers and hand. <sup>295</sup>

Even in the 13th/19th century, according to Lane, henna from the banks of the Nile was widely exported, <sup>296</sup> and it is still the custom in the Middle East to trace delicate henna patterns on the

palms of the hands and the soles of the feet. This is applied as a thick paste with, for example, a wooden toothpick, and should preferably be left on overnight to allow the pattern to take. It lasts for approximately a fortnight.

Antimony was used to increase the luminosity of the eyes <sup>297</sup> and it was kept in small bronze flasks and applied to the eyes with a bronze 'stick'. We know that kohl sticks and toilet flasks were manufactured at Nishāpūr, and two examples from the early Islamic period measure 7.6 cm and 7.4 cm respectively. <sup>298</sup> A small flask from Nishāpūr has a conical body with a rounded profile and vertical ribbing. Its neck is cylindrical, it has a sloping shoulder, and it is undecorated; <sup>299</sup> the shape was evidently dictated by the need to exclude as much air as possible from the product, to prevent it drying out.

This jāriya wears a heavy gold bracelet {siwār} in a cable pattern on each wrist. These may have been hand made or cast. <sup>300</sup> Silver was also used for jewellery, and an Egyptian pair of 8th/14th-century silver bracelets with dragons'-head finials can be seen in the British Museum. <sup>301</sup> Trousseau lists from the 6th/12th century which had been stored in the Cairo Geniza throw valuable light on customs of the time and prices of goods. <sup>302</sup> In Egypt bracelets came in a variety of materials; <sup>303</sup> those enriched with pearls might be valued at from two to five dīnārs, for an ordinary woman, and could cost up to as much as fifteen dīnārs. <sup>304</sup> A marriage contract for a member of the bourgeoisie records a pair of bracelets which cost twenty eight dīnārs. <sup>305</sup> It is possible that Abū Zayd's jāriya is also wearing under her

voluminous sleeves the type of large gold armlet {dumlūj}, which was worn at the elbow. Because of its relatively large size, it was obviously more expensive than the siwār and, depending on the materials and the quality of the workmanship, it cost from at least five dīnārs up to fifteen dīnārs.<sup>306</sup>

We do not see the maiden's feet, but she seems to be wearing a type of fine black leather boot called khuff, or khifāf zarāyya.<sup>307</sup> Similar boots appear in the Istanbul Vargā va Gulshah manuscript.<sup>308</sup> A light rahāwī shoe from Edessa and a maqṣūr or split type were worn in summer, while fur-lined shoes or musha'ara were used in winter.<sup>309</sup> She would probably be wearing a khalkhal or anklet of gold or silver.<sup>310</sup> The word khalkhal is onomatopaeic and apt, for it suggests the clinking of the anklets when walking.<sup>311</sup> An Arab song runs, "The ringing of thine anklets has deprived me of my reason",<sup>312</sup> while the Old Testament mentions "the daughters of Zion ... making a tinkling with their feet".<sup>313</sup>

The wikāya covers the girl's ears, so it is impossible to know if she is wearing earrings, but the gold ḥalqa could be purchased in Egypt for between one and a half and two dinars;<sup>314</sup> Ashtor, however, considers this price is rather low. More affluent ladies of leisure could expect to pay, on average, five dīnārs for a pair. The tuma is described by mediaeval dictionaries as featuring a large bead, possibly a pearl, at its centre,<sup>315</sup> and a trousseau inventory in Cambridge University<sup>316</sup> gives the value of

a pair of earrings worked in gold as two dīnārs.<sup>317</sup>

In her right hand the girl is holding a small bronze mirror by its handle; this appears to conform in size to a roughly contemporary Persian cast bronze mirror measuring 14.7cm,<sup>318</sup> and it is slightly smaller than a similar Persian mirror in the Fogg Art Museum.<sup>319</sup> Her mirror appears to be undecorated, but it might have figurative designs in relief and an inscription of blessings in general towards its owner on the obverse.<sup>320</sup> Relief casting, apparently, did not appear on mirrors from Persia much before the beginning of the 6th/12th century.<sup>321</sup> Their sudden appearance then was probably due to Chinese influence, and followed the uniting of the Tartars of Mongolia and northern China.<sup>322</sup>

In addition to plain disc mirrors, bronze mirrors with central bosses were used in Persia in the 6th/12th and 7th/13th centuries. Two mirrors of this type are in the Louvre.<sup>323</sup> One mirror of the period with a handle is decorated with a mainly geometrical design,<sup>324</sup> while on another five kings' heads appear in roundels.<sup>325</sup> Geniza documents again reveal that in Egypt a simple iron mirror cost from one to two dīnārs, while mirrors made from porcelain, steel or glass would cost from four to five dīnārs.<sup>326</sup> These were more elaborate and might be covered with silver and encrusted with precious stones, or embellished with filigree and gold ornamentation.<sup>327</sup>

A lady and a maid with a mirror are found in a cartouche on



the Blacas Ewer in the British Museum, <sup>328</sup> and one sees a similar scene in an early 8th/14th-century Rashīd al-Dīn Jamī<sup>ʿ</sup> al-Tawārīkh manuscript formerly in the possession of the Royal Asiatic Society, which portrays Abraham and the Three Strangers. <sup>329</sup> At one side Sarah is seated with a silver mirror in her hand, before a small tree which may be a space-filling device. Gray considers that there is almost certainly a Christian or "more probably, a Jewish" original behind the Rashīd al-Dīn miniature. <sup>330</sup>

This seems to bear out a possible similar non-Islamic model for the portrait of the Maqāmat maiden; behind her head there is what appears to be a combination of halo and Classical wreath, and it represents an extension of the halo as frame which this artist of Paris B.N. 3929 usually employs. Alternatively, our jāriya could have been modelled on a female attendant of a noble lady; this would explain the hand gestures, which may be proffering the mirror, and her fine clothing would mirror those of her mistress.

However, the girl's eloquent hand gestures also suggest that she is singing or reciting, and one wonders if her portrait was modelled on a performer at court. This seems possible, for we have noted that Abū Zayd paid testimony to her musical prowess in the earlier references to the musicians at the courts of Mu'awiya and Hārūn al-Rashīd; further, her garments and accoutrements are costly, and historical accounts have confirmed that entertainers were well rewarded for their cultivated skills.

Al-Nuwayrī, who died in 1332, eulogises such a paragon in the

following terms. <sup>331</sup> Her stature should resemble khayzurān or bamboo, with wide hips and pomegranate-like bosom. A round full moon face framed by hair black as night should preferably sport a mole to suggest the effect of a drop of ambergris upon an alabaster plate. Her eyes should naturally be large like those of a deer and intensely dark, without koḥl or antimony, and with languid saqīm eyelids. A small mouth with teeth resembling pearl set in coral was considered most attractive, and tapering fingers which were dyed with red henna at the tips. <sup>332</sup>

Ibn Khallikān has recorded for posterity yet another example of the ubiquity of the ideal of the beauty of the female form in the Arab world of the time by quoting a mid-6th/12th century qaṣīda of al-Ṭarābulusī, which runs,

"Such a one's daughter, she has vanquished me by the variety of her perfections {charms} which consist in the sound of her voice and the aspect of her form, the haughty pose of the Persian, the voluptuousness of Syria, glances like those of the maids of Iraq, and language {sweet as that} spoken in Ḥijāz." <sup>333</sup>

These images complete an almost impossibly idealistic image of Muslim womanhood, who are now far removed from the classical age. Hitti considers that such notions of female beauty have undergone little change throughout the centuries, <sup>334</sup> and the painter of Paris B.N. 3929 has captured well the essence of ideal female beauty in the mediaeval Near East. Illustrations in the manuscript are invariably literal, and this portrait bears testimony to the powers of Abū Zayd's eloquence and the spell he could cast, for 'his' jāriya was yet another figment of his fertile

imagination.

While some of the terms may differ according to region, the picture of women's costume which has emerged is one of a fairly universal type throughout the Islāmic world, in that female modesty is stressed. What seems beyond doubt is that a great variety of luxury items was purchased from all corners of the mediaeval world and that women could put their individual stamp on their style of clothing according to their means and sense of fashion.

{e} Women in the mosque.

We return to al-Wāsiṭī's double-page illustration of the women in the gallery of the Rayy mosque in Maqāma 21, which is reproduced overleaf; the remainder of the scene was fully analysed in "The Arab Governor".

Six adult women sit together in what is presumably a separate galleried area of the jāmi'. Although we, and apparently the congregation, see the women, it is unlikely that this would be so in real life. The upper gallery in the Istanbul E.E. 2916 Rayy mosque illustration contains {presumably female} figures behind a wooden baluster, but no latticework is shown. 335

While there is no prohibition on women entering the mosque,



f. 58v: 4E1

f. 59r: 4E2

a ḥadīth of the Prophet declared that women could attend a mosque, if their husbands permitted. <sup>336</sup> Generally speaking, the aḥādīth reveal that they were not actively encouraged to do so. If women choose to attend they should not be perfumed, nor should they be in a state of ritual impurity, viz., menstruating. <sup>337</sup> Other sources recommend that women should leave the building before the men. <sup>338</sup> We know that some mosques featured a "ladies' section". <sup>339</sup> Women have variously been required to stand at the back of the mosque, <sup>340</sup> have had a special enclosure cordoned off for their exclusive use, <sup>341</sup> or have been concealed behind a wooden grille, as in present-day Medina. <sup>342</sup> Following the introduction of the maḥṣūra or ruler's enclosure, <sup>343</sup> chambers enclosed with wooden latticework were constructed in in mosque hallways for the use of religious students. <sup>344</sup>

Ibn Jubayr's report of 11th Ṣafar in 580/1184 throws further light on the matter of women being segregated for worship. He describes the Bâb al-Badr in the palace square of Baghdād as

"... part of the ḥarīm of the caliph, whose belvedere overlooks it, and {it} is set apart for the reception of those who come to preach here, so that the caliph, his mother and the ladies of his ḥarīm might listen from the belvederes." <sup>345</sup>

A Geniza legal document describes a house in Fāṭimid Egypt having a "secret door", which always gave on to a different street from the main entrance; it also reveals that,

"The entrance to the women's gallery of a synagogue and certainly also of a church was also called a 'secret door'." <sup>346</sup>

and this seems to confirm the likelihood of the existence of a separate entrance to a particular part of a mosque for Muslim



ladies.

The principal character seems to be the ample matriarchal figure at the right hand side. She wears a very decorative striking izār or outer wrap with floral scroll patterns of white and red on a darker red field over the gamīs. Any apparent proscription on the wearing of red garments outlined by al-Washshā' in the 4th/10th century <sup>347</sup> is amplified by the proviso

"... except that which is by nature ... red, such as the red silk stuff called ladh, silk {harīr}, brocade, figured stuff {washī} and khazz silk." <sup>348</sup>

This may imply that this lady comes from the upper class. She appears to be wearing a type of small gold brocaded 'imāma or turban with a peak underneath her all-enveloping robe, and this item could account for the large round heads of all the women. The 'imāma is discussed fully in the context of the Paris B.N. 3929 illustration in the lawcourt in Maqāma 40. <sup>349</sup>

The unusual black silken veil which rests on her forehead above the eyebrows and extends to the bridge of her nose appears to hang from the headdress. Strictly speaking, there is no need for her to have this veil in place, when in the company of other women. It is possibly an indispensable fashion accessory on this occasion.

Al-Washshā's "Section on Fashionable Ladies" mentions the mi'jar or black veil {perfumed with hyacinth}. <sup>350</sup> Stillman says that the mi'jar was an important component of headdress and that it was a piece of cloth, usually of muslin, which was bound around the head. <sup>351</sup> It could, apparently, command a high price, costing from two dīnārs up to fifteen dīnārs, and it also formed an important item of trousseaux. <sup>352</sup> Mediaeval Cairo Geniza documents specify

the mi'jar in silk and linen from Dabīq and elsewhere, and the gilded versions were extremely popular. <sup>353</sup> They might have a border {mu'lam}, or be "doubled". <sup>354</sup> According to Mayer, black was also fashionable in 8th/14th century Egypt; <sup>355</sup> however, neither he nor Serjeant describe or show veils of this type. The women will have left their footwear outside. This lady's wardrobe, and her demeanour, suggest that she viewed this outing to hear the great preacher as an important social occasion and an opportunity to dress up and vie with other women within her social circle.

Despite a rousing sermon on the themes of the transitoriness of life, sin and repentance, by a highly-regarded preacher who was said to be even greater than the 4th/10th century Ibn Sam'ūn, <sup>356</sup> the tenor of the speech seems to have been lost by these female worshippers. Ibn al-Ḥajj denounced conversations in the mosque, on the grounds of disturbance to the pious. <sup>357</sup>

The woman second from the left is the object of reprobation by two of her companions. She is resting her chin on her left arm and is apparently sleeping. However, an examination of the manuscript itself reveals that this not the case; perhaps she is merely bored.

Her outer robe is predominantly gold and green and almost covers her red gamīs, and she wears a pair of asāwir or gold bracelets on her left hand. Al-Wasīṭī's woman in labour in Maqāma 39 in this manuscript <sup>358</sup> wore gold asāwir and the jāriya or maiden in Paris B.N. 3929 also wore {asāwir}. <sup>359</sup> They are tight fitting and must have had a clasp. A 6th/12th century marriage contract among Cairo Geniza documents reveals that the larger gold bracelet

known as dumlūj which was worn at the elbow, {but is not illustrated here}, could cost from ten to fifteen dīnārs,<sup>360</sup> so even these asāwir would be expensive.

To the right, a woman is conversing with the matriarchal figure and her pointing finger confirms this conversation and also provides a link between the two characters. A further visual, decorative, link lies in the similarity in pattern of the robes worn by both these women. The izār of the woman who points has a similar, if denser, floral scroll pattern of white on red and it is reminiscent of that found on a man's robe in the early Mamlūk London B.L. or. add. 22114.<sup>361</sup> Al-Wāsitī did not allow pattern for pattern's sake to detract from the very human element of his compositions and their relationship to the text, as happened in Mamluk manuscripts, and in particular the Vienna A.F.9. However, we do not know if these are authentic textile patterns, or whether al-Wāsitī employed them for their aesthetic qualities.

Well-attired women are found on the frontispiece of Volume II of the Cairo Kitāb al-Aghānī, adab 579.<sup>362</sup> Patterned and coloured garments also appeared on ceramics<sup>363</sup> and mīnā'ī ware.<sup>364</sup> Very similar decoration occurs on metalwork<sup>365</sup> and in book illumination.<sup>366</sup> They are also found in Paris B.N. 5847<sup>367</sup> and Leningrad S.23<sup>368</sup> as architectural ornament in various Maqāmāt. The robes of the other four women are of fine material in plain colours of pink, dark green and silvery-blue, with heavy gold edgings, and their diaphanous qualities and the contours of the female form are achieved by highlighting in white, in a manner reminiscent of Byzantine painting. These figures provide a foil to

the central character, and their robes are also obviously expensive. Plain colours with highlighting also occur on robes and female trousers in the Istanbul Varqa va Gulshah, Hazine 841. <sup>369</sup>

The woman in the pink izār at the centre of our group clearly wears a gold-coloured 'isāba which rests on her forehead above the eyebrows and is of a similar type to that worn by the jāriya in Maqāma 18. <sup>370</sup> A pattern of circlets can be made out, but it is impossible to say if this is gemstones, gold ornaments or a design printed on the material.

A young jāriya or serving girl stands in attendance on her mistress, and she is holding a flag-shaped fan with a handle which may be of palm matting {līf}. Given the crowd in the jāmi' even on an ordinary Friday and the fact that heat rises, perhaps a more realistic means of ventilation would have been the punka on pulleys and cords which is shown, for example, in the Leningrad S.23 lawcourt scene in Maqāma 8, <sup>371</sup> later in al-Wāsiṭī's schoolroom, <sup>372</sup> and in the Istanbul E.E. 2916 school. <sup>373</sup> Alternatively, since this is a jāmi', a large khaysh or wet felt carpet, which is clearly depicted in the Leningrad S.23 mosque in the final maqāma, <sup>374</sup> would have been in order.

A similar hand-held fan also appears in Paris B.N.3929 in the context of a figure of authority. <sup>375</sup> The girl's model therefore may lie in the royal repertory of illustrations, where an androgynous-looking attendant carried a flywhisk, for example in Paris B.N. 6094. <sup>376</sup> In our illustration, her gesture resembles that of the prince's youthful attendant on al-Wāsiṭī's companion page illustration above on folio 59. <sup>377</sup> The Oxford Bodleian

Marsh 458 rather incongruously shows a youth holding a similar fan over the assembled company at the beggars' wedding in Maqāma 30. <sup>378</sup> The girl in the illustration may be the only example in the Maqāmāt illustrations of a female Arab attendant, although al-Wāsiṭī also portrayed the governor of Raḥba's ghulām as an Arab; <sup>379</sup> otherwise his youthful servants invariably seem to be non-Arabs. Of course it is not inconceivable that well-to-do ladies had youthful personal attendants to keep them cool.

Our servant-girl wears a dark green izār with mu'lam muthaggaq or a gold-embroidered edge, the weight of which exaggerates the folds of the robe and suggests that it, too, was made from a fine material. Underneath her izār she wears a pale shift or gamīs. The costume of servants would have to be appropriate to the mistress's own financial circumstances, if only to reflect her position in society.

A striking feature of all these female outer costumes is their colourful gaiety, which is in such contrast to the dark 'abā' worn in public in the Middle East today, and from what little can be seen of their shifts in this illustration, these were also brightly patterned. Cairo Geniza documents confirm the popularity of the colours used by al-Wāsiṭī for female clothing, for the following shades were in vogue, viz., pomegranate, blue, green, yellow and red, as well as pearl or grey/white. <sup>380</sup>

Yāqūt reported that the Suq al-thalātha or Tuesday Market in Baghdad was the busiest market there, and it was adjacent to the Clothmakers' suq. <sup>381</sup> Baghdād and Tabriz, like Nishāpūr, manufactured silken and velvet garments. <sup>382</sup>



The miniature aptly confirms Samadī's description of the ladies' section of the mosque as a brilliant scene "which could well be compared to springtide in a garden".<sup>383</sup> This is an amusing vignette of well-to-do contemporary women, who perhaps represent precisely the types of females whose husbands were the readers of this and similar literature.

Women from a wide cross-section of society have been depicted, and the illustrations supplement contemporary texts and provide a fascinating insight into aspects of everyday social life of the mediaeval period which may have been rather neglected hitherto.

\*\*\*\*\*